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THE INFLUENCE OF ITALY
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THE INFLUENCE OF ITALY ON THE LITERARY CAREER OF ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE

BY

AGIDE PIRAZZINI, PH.D.

VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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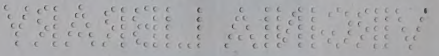

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PREFACE

While much has been written in recent years regarding some of the influences exerted by Italy on Lamartine's literary productions, no work has yet been published attempting to trace this influence, in a connected and systematic form, and as a fundamental and persistent element, from the time of his earlier adolescence, when he began to understand and to appreciate the beauties of literature, to the very end of his literary career, when he was writing the *Cours familier de littérature*, only some ten or twelve years before his death.

For a number of years past it has been my earnest endeavor to collect facts, to discover evidences, to bring to light statements which in their isolated form did not seem to have much meaning, but which, duly coördinated and interpreted, have tended to establish more and more definitely the opinion that the influence of Italy on Lamartine was much deeper and more important than heretofore has been supposed.

The study of Italian sources and authorities, as well as personal visits and investigations in several

of the localities where Lamartine resided, have yielded a number of data and opinions that hitherto have been little considered or entirely overlooked by students of Lamartine's literary career. Without a personal acquaintance with some of the localities involved, it would not have been possible to correct certain erroneous impressions produced by statements of Lamartine himself, which have gone unchallenged; and without a knowledge not only of the Italian language but of some of its dialects as well, certain conclusions could not have been reached. Moreover, in the use made of the documents furnished by Lamartine's own writings, I have been guided by considerations somewhat different from those of merely historical import. This is due to the nature of the present work. We are here dealing with the sources of Lamartine's artistic emotions, with his subjective experiences, and therefore the external events of his career have no interest for us except in so far as they have a direct or indirect bearing on his literary activities. For this reason the documents written in the later years of Lamartine's life have been regarded as more important, for the author's immediate purpose, than those of an earlier date; and accordingly, wherever possible, quotations have been made from them, as showing what emotional elements

from his experiences of earlier years had permanently survived in Lamartine's mind and heart, so that they had become an essential part of himself. Thus the *Confidences*, the *Nouvelles Confidences*, the *Cours familier de littérature* have been regarded as of more value than even the *Correspondance*, which oftentimes represents only a passing impression on the writer and forms the record of feelings which were soon obliterated from his memory, unless indeed they became the immediate source of political and artistic production. Surely, the facts related by Lamartine many years after the events took place may be quite inaccurately recorded from the historical point of view, and, indeed, some of these inaccuracies have been pointed out and rectified in the following pages. Yet, after all, it was not from barren realities but from idealized mental pictures that Lamartine drew his inspirations!

Thus the real Graziella would have remained an altogether commonplace figure and the everyday happenings at that time in Naples altogether vulgar, had not the artistic soul of Lamartine, by the long continued poetical meditation of subsequent years, evoked the picture of the charming "Graziella" of the *Confidences*, ennobled by his imagination and idealized by his love. This is the only true Graziella, ever present in the

poet's mind, ever reappearing in his poetry even when he is singing of other women, even when he is reflecting on subjects apparently unrelated to her or to her environment. All this I have endeavored to show in the following monograph, which is intended to be a point of departure rather than an exhaustive treatment of all the literary and historical questions involved in so large a problem.

Lamartine's literary career may be compared to a great modern symphony. To understand its unity, its unifying idea, in the midst of so many instruments of differing forms and functions, it is necessary to discover the "leitmotiv" running through the whole composition. There may be secondary "motives," but they are limited in their extent and their recurrence; the principal "motif" runs through the music from the beginning to the end. The aim of this dissertation is to show that the "leitmotiv" in Lamartine's literary career is furnished by Italy, and if in spite of defects and limitations this thesis is found to have been established, I feel that my task has been accomplished:

Sic tamen erit consummatus! (2 Macc. xv: 40)

A. P.

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INTRODUCTION

"Tasso, mon premier poète . . ."
"*Corinne*, mon premier roman!"[1]

All of Lamartine's early experiences in the vast field of the world's literature are included in the above brief formulary. In those opening years of his life, it was a great epic poet of Italy and a great romance about Italy, which filled his heart and mind.

In Tasso's works he met with the most refined feelings that can be aroused in an Italian heart when meditating upon the loftiest themes of love, of religion and of honor, expressed in the matchless verses of an immortal poet. In *Corinne* he found the most tender emotions that Italy — her wonderful sky, her glorious memories — can arouse in the sympathetic soul of an exquisite woman who is also a great artist, and who, though born under another sky, might have spoken of Italy in the words which Lamartine, in later years, addressed to the author of the *Leper of Aosta*:

On est toujours, crois-moi, du pays que l'on aime![2]

[1] Préface aux *Recueillements*.
[2] *Harmonies. Le Retour.*

These echoes of Italy resounded in the soul and mind of Lamartine when he was still a child; they made his heart throb when developing into manhood; they comforted his later years — years when, sad and dejected, the messages of love from his ever loyal friends of "Varramista" brought a ray of bright Italian sunshine into the gloom that surrounded him on every side.[3]

He then remembered the happy days he had passed under the brilliant sky of Tuscany, when, as a happy husband, as a proud father, as a respected diplomat, as an admired poet, he felt all the fascination of that

> . . . magna parens frugum
> Saturnia tellus!

Echoes of Italy were mingled with the memories of his childhood days, passed at the little country-house of Milly, when his father used to read aloud from Tasso to the happy family gathered around him; young Italian noblemen were among his college friends; under the serene sky of Naples his heart first awoke to the throbs of real passion for his never-to-be-forgotten Graziella; in the solemn city of Rome he first felt the joy of fatherhood, while, not long after, his tears were shed upon that soil which

[3] See Chaps. IV and VII of this Essay.

had become still more sacred and dear to him since it had opened to receive the mortal form of the first-born of his wedded love. In view of all this, it was but natural that the lyre of the poet should re-echo the melodies produced in his soul by his inner experiences.

It is our endeavor in the following pages to show, as far as may be possible, to what extent Italy and her memories influenced the life and work of the poet who called her "cette seconde patrie de mes yeux et de mon cœur," of him who might have said, like Browning's Italian patriot:

> "Open my heart and you will see
> Written inside of it ITALY!"

A. P.

PART FIRST

CHAPTER I

LAMARTINE'S CHILDHOOD — FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE ITALIAN POETS — TASSO AND THE *JERUSALEM DELIVERED*

In a little country-house at Milly, near Mâcon, far from the tumults and the tempests which the Reign of the Terror had awakened throughout France and Europe, the family of the noble Chevalier de Lamartine had retired, after having but lately escaped from the deadly kiss of Madame La Guillotine, who had been for a long season only too eager to shed the blood of the hated "aristocrates," proved guilty of not loving her friends, the Sans-Culottes.

In the quietness of the country, surrounded by the beauty of nature, Alphonse de Lamartine's early childhood was passed, and it was there that the melodious accents of an Italian poet for the first time caused to vibrate in his heart the chords of poetry which afterwards burst into melody and produced the wonderful *Harmonies* that charm us to-day. Nothing can better describe Lamartine's feelings at this time

than a quotation from his own memories which, though written years afterwards, show us conclusively how lasting was the impression those early scenes had made on his heart and imagination.

This is the translation of Lamartine's narrative:

The shades of night are falling fast. The gates of the little country-house of Milly near Mâcon, are already closed. From time to time the barking of a dog is heard, while the autumn rain keeps beating against the window-panes, and the wind, blowing amidst the trees, produces at intervals a kind of plaintive and melancholy sound.

The room where the family is gathered is almost entirely bare of furniture. At its extremity is an alcove with one bed and, at the foot of it, two baby-cradles. Facing the open fire-place, with his elbow resting on a table, a man is seated holding a book in his hand. It is the Chevalier de Lamartine. Sitting upon an easy-chair is a lady still very youthful-looking, though she has just completed her thirtieth birthday. She is holding in her arms a sleeping baby-girl: the other two little sisters are already asleep in the two little cradles afore-mentioned. Still another little girl, seated on a low stool, is resting her blond head on her mother's knee.

And now Lamartine speaks in the first person:

My father is holding a book in his hands. He is reading in a loud voice. I still can hear the sound of his manly, full, nervous and withal flexible voice, rolling on in large and sonorous sentences, sometimes interrupted by the wind blowing against the windows. My mother, with her head slightly bent, is listening

dreamily. As to myself, my face is turned toward my father and my arm is resting upon one of his knees, while I am drinking in every word; I am anticipating every narrative, I am devouring the book whose pages are too slowly unrolling for my impatient imagination. Now, what book is it, this first book the reading of which, thus heard at the entrance of life, teaches me what a book really is, and opens to me, so to say, the world of emotion, of love and of revery?

This book is the *Jérusalem délivrée*, translated by Lebrun with all the harmonious majesty of the Italian stanzas. . . . In this way Tasso, read by my father and listened to by my mother with tears in her eyes, is the first poet who touched the fibres of my imagination and of my heart." [1]

The importance of this declaration made by Lamartine himself calls for no commentary; his own statement as to the effects produced by the poet of Italy upon his soul, his heart and his imagination, is sufficient for our purpose. Tasso always remained one of Lamartine's most favored poets; many years later, at the beginning of old age, when he had become a past master of language, style and literary criticism, he made the singer of Clorinda and Erminia the object of a long and accurate study, following in the steps of Manso, of Serassi and of Black; and in the *Cours familier de littérature*, with an insight and a keenness much to be admired, he dedicated

[1] *Les Confidences* par A. de Lamartine, Bruxelles, 1849, p. 56.

many pages to the life of Tasso, and to the study of the merits and defects of the *Gerusalemme Liberata*.[2]

We see, therefore, that Lamartine was brought up in an intellectual environment. His mother was a virtuous and pious lady, who, nourished with readings of a serious and profound character, had been able to free herself from foolish and old-fashioned prejudices while remaining an earnest believer in God and religion. She was a reader not only of Bernardin de St. Pierre, but of J. J. Rousseau as well . . . "ces deux philosophes des femmes parce qu'ils sont les philosophes du sentiment." Being the daughter of M^me^ des Roys, under-governess of the children of the Prince d'Orléans, she had been reared amid a select society, composed of savants and men of letters. In the drawing-room of M^me^ des Roys, D'Alembert, Laclos, M^me^ de Genlis, Buffon, Gibbon and Rousseau himself were familiar figures.[3] It is natural, therefore, that the meeting of these master-minds should have had a strong influence on the development of the intellect of young Alice des Roys, who became M^me^ de Lamartine when not yet twenty years of age. And upon the feelings and imagination of our poet

[2] Paris, 1863; entretiens XCI, XCII.

[3] *Les Confidences*, p. 33.

profound influence was exercised not only by his family and his social environment but by the very places amid which his first steps moved: the wild and somewhat barren mountains of Burgundy, — the village of Milly, so solitary and inhabited only by peasants, by vine-dressers and shepherds. Lamartine was a man of intuition, not of reflection; and even in his childhood, imagination and feeling were predominant in him. The strong impression made upon such a nature by the emotions awakened by the almost daily reading of the *Gerusalemme Liberata* left him with an Italianized soul, and the country of Tasso had always for him the fascination of a mistress whose voice vibrated within him and gave inspiration to his poetry. As Voltaire has said: "La patrie est aux lieux où l'âme est enchaînée!"[4]

[4] *Le Fanatisme.* 1, 2.

CHAPTER II

COLLEGE FRIENDS OF LAMARTINE — HIS IMPRESSIONS OF ARIOSTO AND ALFIERI — *CORINNE OU L'ITALIE*

LAMARTINE received his education in the Jesuit college of Belley. While there he became a friend of several Italian young men belonging to the most prominent families of Piedmont, among them the Sambuys, the Ghilinis and the Costas.[1] Thus he early received the very best impressions of the Italian people and nation, and his reverence for the country of Tasso, who always continued to delight him, was increased rather than diminished by his college associates.[2] He also began to read Ariosto in the original, but being new to the intricacies of the Italian language and to the subtleties of the style, he could not enjoy the reading to

[1] *Cours familier de litt.*, entretien CXXIII, p. 169.

[2] Professor Lanson, in his edition of the *Méditations*, published after this work was completed, strikingly states in this way the importance of such associations: . . . "Pour présumer l'effet d'une éducation ce n'est pas tant du côté des maîtres qu'il faut regarder; c'est surtout du côté des camarades. Voilà les vrais éducateurs." (Introd., p. xi.)

any extent. On June 10, 1809, writing from Mâcon to his friend de Virieu, he says:

> L'Arioste est sur ma table. Il y a longtemps, et j'ai honte de le dire, que je l'ai commencé, et je n'en suis qu'au milieu, tant l'intérêt dans un poème et un peu de suite dans ses discours est une belle chose. Ce n'est pas cependant que je ne le trouve, quelquefois, égal au bon homme, mais j'avoue que souvent il me fait bâiller, au lieu de me faire rire, et que j'en saute des pages entières. Est-ce ma faute? Un peu, sans doute, mais c'est aussi un peu la sienne.[3]

Aymon de Virieu, to whom this letter was addressed, was the dearest of Lamartine's college friends, and he often called him in his letters "douce moitié de mon âme," translating the affectionate expression of Horace. Even to a brother Lamartine would not have written more frequently or with more affection. During his travels, during the most trying moments of his political life, de Virieu was always his confidant, his bosom friend, to whom he felt the need of opening his heart in joy or in sorrow.

During this period Lamartine became an enthusiastic admirer of Vittorio Alfieri. He had read several articles upon him in the *Mercure*, the literary journal of Mâcon, and his enthusiasm had increased after the reading of his tragedies translated into French.[4] In the letter already

[3] *Corr.*, I, 81. [4] *Corr.*, I, 83.

quoted from, he says to de Virieu: "I should like to procure all his (Alfieri's) works in Italian, and especially his Life. Have you not got them? I love him to the point of madness. He was so fond of horses, of poetry, of literature, of his friends, of travels, and of glory!!! There is not room enough for all the points of admiration!"

However — as we shall subsequently see — this enthusiasm of the nineteen-year-old Lamartine for the Italian tragedian vanished later on and gave place to a contempt not less exaggerated, and entirely unjustified:[5] "Certes c'est un subject merveilleusement vain, divers, et ondoyant, que l'homme!"[6]

It was about this time that he read *Corinne ou l'Italie* by M^me^ de Staël. This volume filled him with unbounded admiration both for the author and for the subject. He tells us in his "Entretien avec le lecteur" at the opening of the *Recueillements poétiques:* "J'étais, depuis ma tendre enfance, un admirateur exalté du génie et du caractère de M^me^ de Staël. *Corinne* avait été mon premier roman, c'est le roman des poètes!"

His enthusiasm was so great that, even writing after so long a time, he seems to find no language

[5] Entr. sur *Alfieri* in *Cours familier de litt.*

[6] Montaigne, *Ess.* I. c. 1.

strong enough to express it: "J'étais ivre du nom de M^me^ de Staël!" But we cannot doubt that his enthusiasm was chiefly produced by the nature of the subject, for, after some reading of *De l'Allemagne* by the same author he wrote to de Virieu: "Je lis à l'instant l'ouvrage de M^me^ de Staël sur l'*Allemagne*. Je commence à regretter mon argent, quoique cela me paraisse écrit d'un style assez masculin, mais un peu trop à la Dacier!"[7]

After his reading of *Corinne* Italy became more than ever the land of his dreams. Always hoping and strongly desiring to be able to visit the land of Tasso, he continued to study Italian very diligently, and if it is true that with a new language one acquires a new soul, Lamartine's soul must have become Italian indeed. At Mâcon he accepted, with unfeigned pleasure, the invitation of some ladies to take part in an Italian comedy, while the reading of Alfieri's life in the original tongue kept alive in him the enthusiasm for the tragedian.[8] He declared to de Virieu that he loved Alfieri almost as much

[7] *Corr.*, II, 107.

[8] We must notice, however, that he could not have had a real *speaking* acquaintance with Italian at this time. In fact, writing to de Virieu soon after he arrived in Italy he says: "Je *commence* à parler italien *par force* ... les '*ciceroni*' ne parlent qu'italien!" *Corr.*, I, 85.

as he loved Rousseau! What a strange idea to associate two writers so totally and absolutely unlike, even if only in a comparison. But this reveals to us his fondness for paradox even at this early date.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY LOVE AFFAIRS — LAMARTINE SENT TO ITALY — HIS EARLY IMPRESSION OF THE MANNERS OF THE ITALIANS — THE ITALIAN UNIVERSITIES

LAMARTINE had now sufficient preparation of mind and of spirit to undertake profitably his first journey to Italy, in 1811. This gave him the occasion both to reproduce and to define the world of thoughts, of sensations and of fancies which had been struggling within his emotional and dreamy soul. The determining motive which led his family to send him to Italy was his having fallen in love — and his wishing to marry the object of his affections. His sentiment, however, was only one of those youthful inclinations which are more the foreshadowing than the revelation of real love. Séché is quite right in saying,

> En fait de passions, je parle ici de celles qui sont mauvaises, il ne connaissait guère jusqu'à vingt ans que le jeu. . . . Cependant, comme il avait des camarades qui avaient déjà goûté à l'amour, l'idée lui vint un jour d'y goûter lui aussi! Et le voilà follement épris tout à coup d'une jeune fille de Mâcon.[1]

[1] *Lamartine*, p. 83.

His mother wrote in January, 1810: "His passions begin to develop; I fear that his youth and his life may be very stormy — he is agitated, melancholy; he does not know what he wants."[2] The object of his thoughts was a young lady of Mâcon, Henriette P.[3] "J'aime pour la vie," he wrote to a friend, "je ne m'appartiens plus, et je n'ai nulle espérance de bonheur. . . . . Je vais prendre incessament un parti violent pour obtenir sa main à vingt-cinq ans."[4] How always like himself is Lamartine! all impulses, all fire! But this first flower of sentiment had a short life, like all those flowers which open their petals too early to the scorching sun.

About this love-affair, which has importance for us on account of its having led to the journey to Italy, it seems necessary to notice that some critics, like De Mazade, Sainte-Beuve and Pomayrols, identify Henriette P. with "Lucy," a young lady who might be called the first romantic fancy of Lamartine, but not his first love. In fact he never speaks of "Lucy" in any of his writings (not even in his letters) except the *Confidences*.

[2] *Le Manuscrit de ma mère*, p. 153.

[3] P. de Lacretelle has discovered that her family's name was "Pommier." (*Les Orig. et la jeun. de Lam.*, p. 239).

[4] *Corr.*, I, 163.

Yet, notwithstanding his natural grief at being separated from his beloved,[5] Lamartine accepted with joy the proposition to depart for Italy. This joy he expresses in a single phrase, "cette '*Saturnia tellus*' si désirée," which is more eloquent than an entire page. And he adds: "Puissent les grands souvenirs de cette superbe Italie distraire un peu mon esprit de toutes les peines de mon cœur."[6] "An artificial rose fallen from a wreath at a night-dance and hidden in the bottom of a valise, together with a few verses, like a talisman," — this is all that was left of his first love romance soon forgotten for the black eyes of Graziella.[7]

Whoever reads the *Confidences*, including the episode of Graziella, will infer that Lamartine went to Italy in 1808, when, therefore, he was eighteen years old, having been born in 1790. On the contrary, he started for Italy in June, 1811, as clearly appears from his own corres-

[5] That his grief was more assumed than real is revealed by a quotation from a letter written at this time to de Virieu: "Que de larmes vont couler, combien j'aurais d'assauts à soutenir. . . . Mais j'ai du cœur, et *toutes les Armides de ma patrie* ne retiendront pas un preux chevalier qui va courir les aventures et voir tout ce qu'il y a eu, et tout ce qu'il y a encore de beau et de grand dans le monde." *Corr.*, I, 73.

[6] *Corr.*, I, 79.

[7] *Cours familier de litt.*, entr. II, 56.

pondence.[8] But we must not pay too much attention to such inexactitudes. Sainte-Beuve has well said that Lamartine "n'est pas l'homme des dates."[9] And Charles de Mazade completes the characterization:

> Vieux ou jeune, en politique comme en poésie, il brode, il improvise, il ajoute presque malgré lui au texte sacré de la vérité; et c'est certainement un des hommes qui, sans calcul et sans avoir conscience, ont au plus haut degré la faculté de l'inexactitude.[10]

We shall see more of this later on.[11]

In June, 1811, therefore, Lamartine started for Italy together with a lady cousin of his mother and her husband. Among the letters of introduction which he took with him was one for the Countess of Albany, the friend of Alfieri. It had been given him by M. de Santilly, a friend of his father's. Lamartine started on the journey with a heart full of hope and of enthusiasm and with a mind full of various schemes: He intends to keep a diary; he wishes to return with his note-book full of good things, and purposes making a long sojourn in Florence, where

[8] The letter above quoted, e.g., is dated Mâcon, June 10, 1811.

[9] *Portraits Contemporains*, Paris, 1888, p. 290.

[10] Ch. de Mazade, *Lamartine: Sa vie litt. et polit.*, Paris, Didier, p. 107.

[11] Part III of this Essay, chap. VIII.

he will learn to speak the purest Italian; and so on. His first letter to his friend de Virieu is dated from Bologna. Starting from Mâcon he made a rapid excursion through Turin, Milan, Parma, Piacenza, Modena and Bologna. Turin charmed him on account of the regularity and beauty of its buildings. "Je ne me figurais pas une ville aussi belle que Turin, rien n'y manque; l'œil n'y est jamais blessé, toujours étonné et flatté. . . . Milan est une ville dans le goût français!" The "Duomo," he says, is worthy eight days of admiration. "Il faudrait des volumes pour décrire les chefs d'œuvre qui la décorent." At Milan he heard some good Italian music "dans l'immense et magnifique théâtre de la Scala." On the Corso Orientale he saw every night a remarkable display of from five to six hundred magnificent equipages. But the men and the women who occupied them, seemed to him to be too earnest and reserved. He finds an enormous difference between the French manners, of a kindness so open-hearted and demonstrative, and the abrupt and reserved manners of the Italians of that time, who were suffering under foreign oppressors. Even during his long stay at Naples and Florence, when he was attaché to the French Embassy, he complained of the lack of sociability and of the

reserve of manners of the Italians.[12] But a longer acquaintance with them changed entirely this hasty impression,[13] and many of the friends whom he most loved and admired and with whom he kept up a continuous correspondence even when most of the others had deserted him, were Italians.[14]

It is also interesting to notice the favorable opinion that Lamartine formed of Italian higher institutions of learning, and of the self-denying and exalted character of Italy's savants. On the occasion of his visit to the famous University of Bologna, he writes:

> Les cabinets de physique, d'histoire naturelle, d'antiques, sont très beaux. Des professeurs célèbres dans tous les genres y donnent des leçons *gratis* à toute l'Italie; et l'Institut a, en tout, douze mille

[12] The Italians were already secretly preparing for the great Revolution which was to liberate and unify their country, and so were naturally suspicious of strangers till they were fully informed as to their character and motives. This, doubtless, produced on Lamartine's emotional nature this early impression, which he afterwards modified on fuller acquaintance. His political ideas indeed made him suspicious toward the liberal-minded Italian patriots: "Ici ils me croyent une espèce d'intrigant, espion, jésuite," he wrote from Florence as late as 1827, and no doubt he appeared such to those who hated bitterly the Church and the priests.

[13] Cf. *Mémoires inédits*, Paris, 1888.

[14] Cf. Ch. VII.

livres de rentes! Voilà qui fait honneur à Bologne et au désintéressement de ses illustres professeurs!

And the enthusiasm of our poet is such that, writing to de Virieu about it, he exclaims: "Il faudra que nous venions faire des cours ici un de ces hivers!" [15] But, alas! when de Virieu finally joined him, it was at Naples, where the black eyes of Graziella caused Lamartine to forget this, like many other good purposes which were never to be accomplished! Indeed we may repeat with Boileau:

Voilà l'homme en effet. Il va du blanc au noir,
Il condamne au matin ses sentiments du soir.
Importun à tout autre, à soi-même incommode,
Il change à tous moments d'esprit comme de mode:
Il tourne au moindre vent, il tombe au moindre choc:
Aujourd'hui dans un casque et demain dans un froc! [16]

[15] *Corr.*, I, 85.
[16] *Sat.*, VIII, 49.

CHAPTER IV

LAMARTINE AND THE COUNTESS OF ALBANY — VISIT TO TASSO'S SEPULCHRE

CONTINUING his journey, Lamartine reached Florence one evening at sundown and entered the capital of Tuscany "ivre de sensations avant d'être ivre de pensées." A few days afterwards, while visiting Santa Croce, standing before the monument which the Countess of Albany had erected to her beloved Alfieri, he remembered he had a letter of introduction to her, which the splendors of the city had caused him to forget, and forthwith decided to pay her a visit. The Countess, even after the death of Alfieri, held a kind of court in Florence, over which she presided as queen in her palace on the banks of the Arno. She received with great kindness the young poet, who appeared before her full of timidity and uneasiness. She had him visit Alfieri's room, and as he was taking his leave she invited him to dinner. When we remember the unlimited admiration that Lamartine felt at that time for the Italian tragedian,

we shall not wonder at the profound feeling which kept him standing motionless on the threshold of the room which contained souvenirs so suggestive. It seemed to him as if he found himself at the entrance of a temple! If he had been alone he would have knelt on the floor which had been trodden by the feet of the great man. But he had to content himself with furtively plucking a part of the quill which had perhaps been used for the writing of *Mirra* and of *Saül*. This relic he always preserved, together with a leaf from the laurel-tree which overshadows the tomb of Virgil, and with a fragment of brick from the prison of Tasso, which he caused to be set in a ring.[1] Such fetichism causes us to smile, especially when we remember that later on he bitterly criticized the tragedian of Asti. At this time, from Florence, our poet was making frequent visits to Leghorn — which he calls "un magnifique port de mer" — and also to Pisa and Lucca. He then wrote to some of his friends that he was becoming ever more adept in the use of the Tuscan tongue, "vraiment céleste." The influence of Italy and of her poets over him was such as to cause him to write to his friend Bienassis to forgive him if his French had no common sense . . ., "je

[1] *Cours familier de litt.*, entr. VII, 81.

l'oublie entièrement, et je n'honore plus que des poètes italiens." [2]

In the *Confidences* Lamartine relates a strange adventure which must belong to this period, if real. It began in a stage coach, and had its epilogue in Rome; but since in the *Correspondance* there is no trace of it, one may well suspect that it was a product of the poet's fervid fancy. Lamartine had made the acquaintance of a young man, apparently of his own age, who was accompanying M. Davide, the famous tenor who was making his voice heard throughout Europe's principal theatres. When the company reached Rome, Lamartine discovered that his new friend was not a man, but a woman in love with Davide. In order to avoid trouble she was travelling in men's clothes. The two visited Rome together; but there was no danger of the friendship becoming love. Lamartine writes in his *Confidences:* "Camille plus âgée que moi de quelques années ne me témoignait pas d'autres sentiments que ceux d'une véritable amitié un peu tendre." [3] Sainte-Beuve, however, seems to doubt the purity of this friendship when he says that "La Camilla fait transition entre Lucy et Graziella." [4]

[2] *Corr.*, I, 178. [3] *Confidences*, p. 138.
[4] *Causeries du lundi*, I, 28.

In the *Confidences* Lamartine tells us also that he spent the winter in Rome, and that he arrived at Naples on April 1; but in reality, in the latter part of November, 1811, he was already at Naples. There he was so short of money that he was compelled to live on credit.[5] But while he was still in Rome, on November 18, he wrote to de Virieu a letter which is in total contradiction with what he tells us in the *Confidences* about his running up and down, and visiting the Roman monuments with Camille: "Je mène la vie d'un ermite; j'erre le matin dans les vastes solitudes tout seul."[6] Rome held him completely enchained to herself by an irresistible fascination. The Roman artists, always kind-hearted and generous, made him change his first impression of the manners of the Italians: "Ils sont tous de l'honnêteté et de la complaisance la plus aimable!"[7] He felt melancholy at this time, and he wrote saying that the aspect of the city, its monuments, its silence and its peacefulness were doing his soul good, as they had done in the case of Byron. Like Mme de Staël he judged that city to be the place most adapted to sadness, to dreams, to hopeless sorrow! During this time Lamartine visited Tasso's sepulchre, and, like Leopardi, he wept over it. How many

[5] *Corr.*, I, 183. [6] *Corr.*, I, 185. [7] *Corr.*, I, 85.

sweet memories were awakened in him at the sight of that little square stone: Milly, his childhood, his father's reading the *Gerusalemme Liberata* — all this appeared before his mind's eye, and, to render the vision more perfect, there was the autumn rain striking against the windows and the wind whistling amidst the branches of the trees. His soul felt that Rome was its real spiritual home, the place where kindred spirits are haunting every recess at every footstep, Byron's "city of the soul!" [8] It was also an impression gained during this first sojourn [9] in Rome which suggested to him the beautiful simile contained in the *Méditation* entitled *La Foi:*

. . . Tel qu'au pied des collines
Où Rome sort du sein de ses propres ruines
L'œil voit dans ce chaos, confusément épars,
D'antiques monuments, de modernes remparts,
Des théâtres croulants, dont les frontons superbes
Dorment sous la poussière, ou rampent sous les herbes,
. . . . . .

Telle est notre âme, après ces longs ébranlements
Secouant la raison, jusqu'en ses fondements,

[8] *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto IV.

[9] It seems that since this visit to Tasso's sepulchre the Italian "Leonora" took, in his poetry and in his imagination, the place before occupied by the French "Eléonore" of Parny. Cf. P.-M. Masson, *Les deux Eléonore*, *Revue d'Histoire litt.*, avril–juin 1913.

Le malheur n'en fait plus qu'une immense ruine
Où, comme un grand débris, le désespoir domine.

M. René Doumic has discovered the prose development of these stanzas, written on a page of one of Lamartine's *carnets* preserved at Saint Point.[10] And G. Lanson remarks: "Il est probable que l'imagination juvénile de Lamartine était guidée dans la visite de Rome par *Corinne* où le motif descriptif est indiqué." [11]

[10] *Carnet de Voyage en Italie* by R. Doumic in *Le Correspondant*, July 25, 1908.

[11] Lamartine's *Méditations*, vol. I, p. 170, notice.

CHAPTER V

LAMARTINE AT NAPLES — GRAZIELLA — ITALIAN ORIGIN OF *LE CRUCIFIX*

Naples, the fascinating Parthenope, charmed our poet. Whoever has read the episode of Graziella must remember those splendid descriptions which are like a hymn, though the form is prose. Even in the letters which Lamartine writes to his friends, his enthusiasm is poured out in pages full of passionate lyrics. There are some persons upon whom a combination of many beauties, whether they be natural or the product of art, produces the effect as of a weight laid upon them. This is exactly what happened to Lamartine. At Naples he felt oppressed by vague fits of melancholy, which led him to write to Bienassis: "Suivons le gros du troupeau, qui mange et qui dort et vit au jour la journée, sans s'inquiéter d'amour, ni d'avenir, ni de gloire. Ces noms-là nous font battre le cœur: tant pis! Heureux celui qui ni les entend, ni les comprend."[1] It is interesting to notice that in Naples the religious sentiment became much

[1] *Corr.*, I, 190.

stronger in him. It was not, however, a profound feeling, but rather that vague and indefinite sentiment which abounds in his poems and for which he has been reproached by many as having something pantheistic rather than Christian.

Meanwhile he was adapting himself to the environment. In that atmosphere, inviting to idleness, he became indolent and confesses that he was doing nothing, that he was forgetting the pure Italian and learning rather the Neapolitan dialect, and finally that he had become a real "lazzarone." He even became addicted to gambling and to making debts.[2]

Fortunately Aymon de Virieu, after having been awaited impatiently by Lamartine, arrived at Naples. Once together, the two youths thought of nothing but amusing themselves and having a "good time." Our poet had said before that he felt inconsolable at the sad ending of his Mâcon love-romance; but poor Henriette was very soon forgotten now! This is how it happened:

In the tobacco-factory directed by one of his relatives, M. Darest de Chavanne, at whose house Lamartine was stopping, there was employed a young woman of splendid beauty. Her eyes were so black and sparkling that the heart

[2] *Corr.*, I, 194.

of our Alphonse was set aflame by them. Under the fire of this new love the image of Henriette melted like wax and vanished, and the Neapolitan Graziella was enthroned in her stead. "Jusqu'à sa rencontre avec Graziella, on peut dire qu'il n'avait pas aimé," says Séché.[3]

Graziella, the poetical and touching story narrated in the *Confidences*, was written in 1843. This is stated in the somewhat long dedication to his friend Guichard de Bienassis, in which the poet undertakes to justify the publication of his familiar, personal and intimate reminiscences. From 1811, the year in which he fell in love with Graziella, to 1843, there is an interval of not less than thirty-two years. During this interval, which was very stormy, Lamartine experienced the strongest and most intense passion of his whole life: the love for the wife of the scientist Charles, Julie, whom he calls "Elvire" in his verses. When, therefore, he wrote the history

[3] *Lamartine*, p. 83, note. — We have already noticed that his love for Henriette was more assumed than real, and Lamartine had easily prophesied a happier ending to it than death, when, writing to de Virieu before his journey to Italy he says: "Peut-être à ton premier voyage viendras-tu chercher le tombeau de ton ami à Rome ou à Naples . . . Peut-être, mais il y en a *de plus consolants*, etc." And the consolation was quite full and complete, as we see.

of his love for Graziella, he was looking back to his past and to the memories of his sojourn at Naples, which appeared to him, as a whole, surrounded with light and poetry. In such a case details are no longer distinguishable, or if it is possible to discern them, they appear in a peculiar light which gives them a new aspect.

The story of Graziella fills a full half of the *Confidences*. It may be called a romance wherein the only real things are the persons and the places. But the sentiment which binds together the hero and the heroine is misrepresented and falsified, while the very circumstances about which it revolves are imaginary. Charles de Mazade, writing upon the love of Lamartine for Graziella, says that it was "une émotion de jeunesse ravivée plus tard, idéalisée et transformée en poème!"[4] And Sainte-Beuve says:

> La charmante corailleuse de Naples est en partie une création, une de ces aventures qui ne laissent que trop peu de traces dans la vie, et qui ne se retrouvent que plus tard, dans les lointains de la pensée, quand le poète ou le peintre sent le besoin d'y chercher des sujets d'élégie ou de tableau.[5]

We know, however, that "la corailleuse," as Sainte-Beuve calls her, had in reality a much

[4] *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Aug. 10, 1870, p. 570.
[5] *Causeries du lundi*, I, 6.

more prosaic calling, for she was in fact a cigar-maker.

The truth about Graziella, reconstructed according to the most recent and very careful researches on the early life of Lamartine, is as follows: Young Alphonse had been recommended to one of his relatives, M. Darest de la Chavanne, who was then director of the tobacco-manufactory at Naples. De Chavanne, having learned that Lamartine had arrived and was stopping at a hotel, went to see him and offered him the hospitality of his own home, which was accepted. The house was situated at S. Pietro in Martire, near the Molo. M. Darest employed in his tobacco-factory many women of the suburbs of Naples and the neighboring islands. Among them were several fishermen's daughters. Young Lamartine, indolent and unoccupied as he was, spent much of his time in the society of these girls, especially in the evenings when they quit work. The girl whom he afterwards made so famous under the name of Graziella, was the daughter of a fisherman of Procida. She listened to the passionate words of the young stranger, she loved him, indeed she adored him with all the fire and passion of the daughters of the South, and she gave herself to him. "Il cueillit cette fleur du Midi et en respira le parfum

qui, pour un temps, enivra ses sens."[6] The sentiments of Lamartine at this time are well expressed by Saint-Marc Girardin: "Le héros complaisamment enfermé dans la béatitude du moi, se laisse aimer par la belle Procitane, recevant tout, et ne donnant rien." [7]

That this love was not merely idyllic, as it appears in the *Confidences*, may also be inferred from the reticence which Lamartine uses in his correspondence. He never speaks of Graziella; but in a letter — one letter only — to de Virieu, dated November, 1813, there is an allusion easy to be understood: "*Depuis Naples*, je n'ai pas ouvert mon cœur une seule fois." Such reticence is quite natural, since the poet could not have had a conscience entirely easy in this regard. We have a stronger proof in a letter of his, which Deschanel states to be a part of the collection of autographs belonging to M. Chavaray.[8] In this letter, addressed to a friend, we read the following words:

J'ai eu la sottise de me laisser aller avec une petite fille qui est belle comme un ange et bête comme une oie. Je ne sais comment m'en dépêtrer. Il faudrait lui trouver une petite place; case-la moi donc quelque part, car je ne sais plus qu'en faire.

[6] Reyssié, *La Jeunesse de Lamartine*, p. 152.

[7] Saint-Marc Girardin, *Cours de litt. dramatique*, IV, 106.

[8] Deschanel, *Lamartine*, Paris, C. Levy, 1893.

And besides, whoever remembers the poem entitled *Le Passé* contained in the *Nouvelles Méditations* can well understand that this was "une partie carrée" (if we may so call it), formed by Lamartine and Graziella on the one hand, and by de Virieu and a second girl, from Pozzuoli or Chiaia, on the other. This is the quotation that proves the point:

Combien de fois près du rivage
Où Nisida dort sur les mers
La beauté crédule ou volage
Accourut à nos doux concerts!
Combien de fois la barque errante
Berça sur l'onde transparente
Deux couples par l'amour conduits,
Tandis qu'une déesse amie
Jetait sur la vague endormie
Le voile parfumé des nuits!

The souvenir of Graziella only furnished the occasion to write a touching romance, poetical and passionate, and furnished Lamartine with a *motif* for the display of all the most brilliant colors of his palette. No wonder that, in Lamartine's fertile imagination, the humble and discreditable love-story should have become transformed into a chaste idyl of the utmost purity, wherein the passion of the ardent Neapolitan girl is transformed by a breath of idealism. His fancy indeed was capable of much more than that!

The story of Graziella, as we have seen already, was written in 1843, and this fact caused someone to say that "il couronnait sa politique par des idylles." At any rate that adventure, so simple, so commonplace, but dramatic on account of its ending, assumed, as time went by, the form of an idyl in Lamartine's own mind. The remembrance of the ardent young creature, of her passion, spontaneous and so disinterested, and of her untimely death, could never be obliterated from the poet's memory. Perhaps there may have been some part of an artist's egotism in his frequently drawing inspiration from the poetical memories connected with Graziella; but doubtless a true and profound feeling of pity, joined with remorse, had its share in it. Surely, without true emotion, words such as these could not have been thought of or written:

> Pauvre Graziella! . . . Je ne sais pas où dort ta dépouille mortelle, ni si quelqu'un te pleure encore dans ton pays; mais ton véritable sépulcre est dans mon âme. C'est là que tu es recueillie et ensevelie toute entière. Ton nom ne me frappe jamais en vain. J'aime la langue où il est prononcé. Il y a toujours au fond de mon cœur une larme qui filtre goutte à goutte et qui tombe en secret sur ta mémoire pour la rafraîchir et pour l'embaumer en moi.[9]

[9] *Confidences*, p. 264.

This he wrote in 1829.

Charles Alexandre, the private secretary of Lamartine, affirms that the poet "avait calomnié à dessein l'amoureux, dans son généreux souvenir, pour donner tout l'intérêt à la jeune fille"; that "il l'aima plus qu'il ne l'a dit"; that "des accents sincères échappés à l'émotion trahissent la vérité." [10]

Personally we are inclined to believe that Lamartine loved Graziella only after her death, that is, after the remembrance of her was entirely idealized by the artist's imagination. Then his heart also was touched, but only after the poet had become aware that the incidents of his Neapolitan love, the beauty and sincerity of Graziella, and her most pitiful end, constituted one of the purest and richest sources of poetical inspiration which he had to draw upon. Therefore, in our judgment, there is in this process a good deal of so-called "self-suggestion"; but this does not prevent the sentiment itself from being genuine, whether it be spontaneous or reflex.

We must notice that the third of the *Méditations*, which is dedicated to "Elvire," was suggested to the poet by the memory of Graziella, as he tells us in his own commentary on it. The

[10] *Souvenirs sur Lamartine*, p. 169.

poem entitled *Le Golfe de Baïa* was written in 1813, precisely at the time when the delight of love and the fascination of nature had full sway over him. There, in the Gulf of Naples, before the divine beauty of those scenes, he felt himself inspired, and he recorded in writing his inspirations while his friend de Virieu was drawing sketches for his "album." Likewise *Le Passé*, a *Méditation* inscribed to Aymon de Virieu, is closely connected with the memories of Graziella, and of the happy days they passed in Naples during 1811 and 1812. Indeed it is quite possible that *L'Hymne au soleil*, written in 1812, may have been inspired by the memories of Graziella, and G. Lanson penetratingly remarks: "... Je ne serais pas étonné que, dans son esprit, Lamartine ait rattaché le poème au souvenir de Graziella." [11]

[11] The tendencies of recent criticism are to recognize that Graziella's influence on Lamartine is much greater than it was heretofore supposed. Thus Des Cognets does not hesitate to declare that *le Temple*, generally ascribed to Mme Charles' influence, must be ascribed to Graziella's, and gives various good reasons for it. He also declares that "Toute la fin de '*Novissima Verba*' est consacrée à Graziella" and concludes that "si l'on restitue *le Temple* à Graziella ... on conviendra qu'il reste bien peu de chose en propre à la pauvre héroïne de Raphaël." (*La Vie intérieure de Lamartine*, p. 76, note; p. 610; p. 160.)

After his return to France from his first Italian journey, the poet gave himself up completely to a life of gambling and of dissipation. But one day in Paris, as he was walking solitary and dejected in the Luxembourg gardens, all at once there arose in his mind the vision of the Gulf of Naples, and of the cottage of Graziella emerging like a water-lily from the waves, on the island of Procida. He was not then aware that the unfortunate girl had died, but in the loneliness of that garden, keenly realizing the contrast between his actual existence (given over as it was to unworthy pleasures), and the hours so full of poetical inspiration, of sweet emotion and love, which he had passed at Naples, the poet felt oppressed by a great sadness, in which the bitterness of regret and the fear of the unknown were commingled, and he was suddenly overcome by a presentiment of the death of Graziella. Forgetting everything else, he laid his elbows on the low wall at his side, and dreamt of the past. When he lifted his head, the stone was wet with tears, and a few moments later, shutting himself up in his room, he wrote *Tristesse*, one of the *Méditations* in which Graziella is evoked with a touching emotion:

Partons ! Je veux revoir encore
Le Vésuve enflammé sortant du sein des eaux;

Je veux de ses hauteurs voir se lever l'aurore,
Je veux, guidant le pas de celle que j'adore,
Redescendre en rêvant de ces riants coteaux, etc.

And then he expresses his longing and his love for Italy in this fashion:

Je ne demande aux Dieux que de guider mes pas
Jusqu'aux bords qu'embellit ta mémoire chérie,
De saluer de loin ces fortunés climats
Et de mourir aux lieux où j'ai goûté la vie !

He also addressed another salutation in verse to Graziella, *L'Adieu à Graziella*, a very tender composition, written in 1813. Her memory follows him constantly; her image never leaves him, but rather becomes more vivid in his mind and heart. From 1813 to his old age he continued to weave for her a wreath of the purest flowers, which will never fade. In 1829, having lost his mother, who died a terrible death,[12] he finds himself alone at Monculot, full of sadness amid the solitude of the forests, recalling the past. But suddenly a ray of sunlight falls upon him, a vision passes before his eyes:

Un jour, c'était au bord ou les mers du Midi
Arrosent l'aloés de leur flot attiédi.
. . . . . .
C'était aux premiers jours de mon précoce été,
Et je ne connaissais de ce monde enchanté,

[12] She was scalded to death while taking a hot bath in her own house.

Que le cœur d'une mère, et l'œil d'une beauté
Et j'aimais . . .
. . . . . .
Et nous étions en paix avec cette nature,
Et nous aimions ces prés, ce ciel, ce doux murmure,
Ces arches, ces rochers, ces astres, cette mer
Et toute notre vie était un seul aimer.[13]

Shortly afterwards, in Paris, he dictated that most beautiful and celebrated elegy, *Le premier regret:*

Sur la plage sonore où la mer de Sorrente, etc.

and in his comment he tells us how it came to his memory:

It was a spring day in 1830, and his wife had asked him to accompany her to the vesper services in the Church of San Rocco. While the religious songs were echoing, he was leaning against a pillar from which was hanging a painting representing the exhumation of a virgin in the place of whom only white lilies were found. All of a sudden that scene made him think of Graziella: "Je n'entendis plus rien, et ces vers roulèrent dans ma pensée avec quelques larmes dans mes yeux. Je rentrai et je m'assis pour écrire ces strophes. . . ."

In 1857, when a burden of sorrows was oppressing the old man, whose life had been a long

[13] *Harmonies*, IV.

succession of victories and defeats, Graziella again appeared to him, and inspired *La Fille du pêcheur*, a poem full of graceful biblical images. We may well repeat with Reyssié:

> Si l'homme a eu des torts, si l'on peut lui reprocher sa froideur et son égoïsme (n'avait-il pas vingt ans?) le poète a racheté sa faute, et la pauvre Graziella doit pardonner à l'amant qui lui a donné l'immortalité.[14]

And not only in his rhymes is the figure of Graziella present to the poet's eye. In his romances, *Geneviève*, *Le Tailleur de pierres de Saint-Point*, *Fior d'Aliza*, *Antoniella*, where men and women of the common people reveal noble and pure characters, it is probable (as Charles de Pomayrols affirms) [15] that Lamartine has merely transformed into devotion and virtue the fascination Graziella exerted on him. Deschanel goes still further, and says that in 1814 Lamartine traced the first outline of one of the most perfect lyrics that have ever been written, *Le Lac*, while recalling the momentary happiness he had at Naples in 1812 by the side of Graziella.[16]

Indeed it may be affirmed that even in the famous *Le Crucifix* there are found reminiscences of Graziella, as for instance in the stanza:

[14] *La Jeunesse de Lamartine*, p. 175.
[15] *Lamartine*, p. 18.
[16] *Lamartine*, I, 106.

Le vent qui caressait sa tête échevelée
Me montrait tour à tour ou me voilait ses traits,
Comme l'on voit flotter sur un blanc mausolée
L'ombre des noirs cyprès.

This was not true of "Julie," who died in the manner everybody knows, when Lamartine was far away from her, but our poet could never dissociate the image of Graziella from his thoughts when his heart was deeply moved by love or sorrow, so that he attributes to Julie what really belongs to Graziella.

These reminiscences are, to our mind, the only contribution of Italian origin to *Le Crucifix*. Whatever has been written in recent years about this *Méditation* being inspired by an Italian poet, is not based upon any trustworthy proof.[17] As to the Italian form of the title, *Il Crocifisso*, which Lamartine gave, nobody knows why, to the canvas of *Le Crucifix*, it may easily be explained from the fact that from the time of his journey to Italy our poet had formed the habit of mingling Italian expressions in all his prose writings, as we notice further on.[18]

[17] Cf. P. Martino in *Revue Universitaire*, March 15, 1905.

[18] The original manuscript examined by J. des Cognets (*Bibl. de la Faculté de Lettr., Univ. de Paris*, vol. XXI, 1906) has the title *Il Crucifisso* instead of *Il Crocifisso* as it would undoubtedly have been if Lamartine had had an Italian

But from all the preceding facts and considerations it is evident that, even during this earlier part of Lamartine's life and career, his best songs, his highest conceptions, were inspired by Italy and the memory of experiences connected with that country.

original in mind. But we are inclined to think that it was an idea connected with the Latin liturgy of the crucifixion which unconsciously led the pen of the poet to write *Il Crucifisso* at the head of his poem.

PART SECOND

CHAPTER I

RETURN OF LAMARTINE TO FRANCE — THE *SAUL* OF ALFIERI AND OF LAMARTINE

Reverting now to the point of Lamartine's first return from Italy, it appears that the family of our poet, having had knowledge of his adventure with Graziella and feeling anxious about it, called him home. He had left France in June, 1811, and set foot upon it again in April, 1812.

Sainte-Beuve says that Lamartine, not feeling in good health, returned soon to Italy, in 1813, and that a number of verses of the *Méditations* and many of the reminiscences that were afterwards utilized by the poet in his writings, date from this journey.[1] But this may confidently be denied. Lamartine saw Italy for the second time only in May, 1820, when he went back to Naples as attaché to the French embassy.

His first journey to Italy, however, had such an immense influence on all his future work

[1] *Portraits contemp.*, I, 290.

and career that we feel justified in ending the first part of our study at the close of it. Henceforth Lamartine is a different man and, to express it with de Mazade:

> Ce voyage en Italie a été une des grandes influences de la vie de Lamartine. . . . Ce premier voyage d'Italie est en réalité pour lui comme une fécondation nouvelle, une sorte d'émancipation et d'extension d'intelligence . . . des arts, de la poésie, des souvenirs et des paysages.[2] . . .

"Quand il revint d'Italie, un poète était né!" says Séché.[3]

We have already spoken of the great admiration of young Lamartine for Alfieri, both as a man and as a tragedian. After his journey to Italy, he still continued (and with even greater love, for he now understood him better) to read and to study the Italian poet. To de Virieu he wrote, saying that he felt his head to be full of ideas, and that he was meditating a tragedy in imitation of those of Alfieri. *Saül* seemed to him to be the best work that Alfieri had produced, and therefore, with a strange daring that can only be forgiven to an enthusiastic and inexperienced youth, Lamartine purposed to rewrite the tragedy in his own fashion. "The attempt to rewrite such a masterpiece can only give rise to

[2] *Op. cit.*, I, 50. [3] *Lamartine*, p. 83.

such a surprise as one would feel if somebody were to try laying his hand again on *King Lear* or *Hamlet*," observes Prof. Colagrosso of the University of Naples.[4] But it was not enough to imitate; Lamartine proposed to surpass the masterpiece of Alfieri! His *Saül* will have "une marche qui me paraît plus chaude, et une intrigue un peu plus pressée que la sienne."[5] Having conceived the poem in October, 1813, Lamartine finished his *Saül* in April, 1818, and intended to have his tragedy performed by Talma, but this was never done. The poet himself informs us that "cette tragédie n'a jamais été représentée."[6] Though following closely in the footsteps of Alfieri, Lamartine's *Saül* falls far below its original. In his attempt to surpass Alfieri, Lamartine was doomed to failure from the very first, for he was above everything a *lyric* poet, while Alfieri was a genius eminently tragic, stern and unflinching — as was the man himself.

Our thought has been well expressed by Alexandre Vinet in the following passage:

La subjectivité (car ce terme est nécessaire depuis qu'il existe) caractérise vivement la poésie de Lamartine. Rien dans aucun de ses ouvrages, ne peut le classer parmi ces poètes que le titre de *dramatiques*

[4] *Studii di letteratura*, Verona, 1892.
[5] *Corr.*, I, 206.
[6] Commentaire sur la *Médit.* XXVII.

désigne suffisamment, et dont le talent propre est de faire à volonté de la vie d'autrui la leur. Mais Lamartine est subjectif, plutôt qu'intime; il est sensible, et jamais passionné. La sensibilité, qui est l'imagination de l'âme, de même que l'imagination n'est peut-être que la sensibilité de l'esprit, n'est pas plus le principe des passions fortes que le point de départ de la vertu. On peut, avec beaucoup de sensibilité, être peu propre à la passion; peut-être l'est-on autant moins qu'on est plus sensible: ce qui nous répand ne nous concerne pas.[7]

On the contrary, every one of Alfieri's poetical productions has rightly been called "a hymn of war," and the dominating characteristics are strength, courage and rebellion against every sort of tyranny. His versification is admirably adapted to the expression of great passions, just as Lamartine's harmonious, velvet-like, tinkling verses are wonderfully suited to the expression of lyric sentiments.

Some general remarks and a few definite parallels will be necessary in order to give a fair idea of both works.

The skeleton of the French tragedy is, to a large extent, the same as the Italian. One of the characteristic differences, perhaps the most important, is that Alfieri, in this as in all his other tragedies, concentrates the attention on *one* central figure, and shows the gradual unfolding of

[7] Vinet, *Études sur la litt. fr. au* XIX^e *s.*, vol. II, p. 93.

one great passion in the different episodes of the plot. This gives great unity to all his work, and allows the author to go deep into the psychological analysis of his heroes' passions. In this case Saul fills the stage with his own personality. Even when he does not actually stand before our eyes, our thoughts are with him, and we expect to hear at any time one of his outbursts of joy or sorrow. Not so in the case of Lamartine's tragedy, where our interest in secondary characters causes us often to forget the protagonist.

The earlier scenes of both tragedies are very similar: The soliloquy of David near Saul's tent, the meeting between the former and Jonathan, the soliloquy of Michal who has been stirred to utterance by her early morning sorrow, her meeting with Jonathan, who prepares her for the unexpected joy of meeting her husband again, — these are all scenes which Lamartine has taken from Alfieri. The only new element we find, is Michal's prayer to God to protect Saul, her father, and to give her back David, her husband. After her prayer the sorrowing Michal feels great relief, and gives expression to these poetic words:

Quoi ! le ciel aurait-il écouté ma prière?
Je sens que ma tristesse en devient moins amère:

Il semble qu'en mon cœur une invisible main
Verse un baume inconnu qui rafraîchit mon sein !

These lines show, if nothing else, the superiority of Lamartine over Alfieri in analyzing true *religious feelings*, in which art he was a master !

The prayer is in fact answered, and shortly afterward Michal holds David to her bosom.

In the second act of Alfieri's tragedy the beauty of the sunrise, which seems to portend a happy day, arouses Saul's heart, and the contrast between the calmness of nature and the anguish of the unhappy king, whose thoughts are turned to the happy years of his youth, is wonderfully drawn.

In the French tragedy, on the contrary, the sky itself appears darkened before the eyes of Saul by a cloud of blood, and Michal in vain exclaims:

Mon père, calmez-vous, jamais sur la nature
L'aurore n'a paru plus sereine et plus pure.

The lamentations of Saul are identical in both tragedies. The only difference is that Lamartine's Saul complains much more at length of his whitening hair, of his growing old, and so forth. While he fears the battle with the Philistines, the portrayal does not reveal in profound strokes that more tremendous battle which is

taking place within his spirit. He is no more the king moved by conflicting feelings, who, while fearing David, yet desires his presence, who never remains for any length of time in the same mood, but passes from one to the other with the rapidity of the man who is broken in mind as well as in body: A grave fault this! And this is where Alfieri greatly excels Lamartine.

The first two acts of Alfieri are combined in the first of Lamartine's tragedy. In the second act Lamartine introduces the episode of the witch of Endor, but in deference to the "unity of place" the scene occurs within Saul's dwelling, thus losing not a little of its beauty. Our imagination remains cold, as it would do if the three weird sisters of Macbeth were made to utter their prophecies within his own house! Lamartine, however, approaches the skill of Alfieri in showing us Saul as a tender father. — The second act of the French tragedy, like the third of the Italian, ends in Saul's assault upon David; in both the wrath of the king is provoked by David's unguarded speech.

Lamartine's third act is composed of only a few scenes, but one of them, the second, is perhaps the most beautiful of his tragedy. In it Lamartine imitates Alfieri in presenting Saul as at one moment seized by mad fury, at another pro-

foundly discouraged; but he adds something original by imagining that the music of the sacrifices recalls David's songs to his memory, and he asks Michal to repeat them to him while the music continues. The songs which Lamartine puts in Michal's mouth are similar to those of David in Alfieri's tragedy, but in this latter case the Italian poet shows more vividly the rapidity of the feelings which in succession possess the soul of the old king.

In the fourth act Lamartine imitates Alfieri in such a way that we may almost say that while he was composing it, he must have had the Italian tragedy constantly before his eyes. The second scene is identical with the third of Alfieri. Jonathan reproaches his father for his ingratitude toward David, who is risking his very life for them. Saul, in his turn, tries to make Jonathan believe that David has secret designs against them in order to gain the royal crown. Jonathan's answers show him to be the generous and religious-minded youth depicted by Alfieri, acknowledging David's superior merits and his own willingness to leave the throne to him if such be God's will. Then follows an almost verbal imitation of Alfieri:

SAUL

La prudence te parle, il est temps de l'entendre,
Et ne l'entends-tu pas dire ainsi que moi:
"David, que David meure, ou David sera roi?"

. . . . .

JONATHAS

Et n'entendez-vous pas une autre voix vous-même
Vous crier: "C'est David que j'ai choisi, que j'aime:
C'est moi qui le protège, et qui guide ses pas;
Chacun de ses exploits, ne le prouve-t-il pas?"
N'avez vous pas senti vous-même à son approche,
S'évanouir le doute, expirer le reproche?
Et, prêt à le frapper, ne vous ai-je pas vu
Sans courroux devant lui reculer, confondu?

SAUL

Hélas! il est trop vrai; je ne sais quel empire
Exerce ce David que je crains, que j'admire!

SAUL

Voce non odi entro il tuo cor, che grida?
"David fia 'l re?" — David! fia spento innanzi!

. . . . .

GIONATA

E nel tuo core, in più terribil voce,
Dio non ti grida? "Il mio diletto è David;
L'uom del Signore egli è". Tal nol palesa
Ogni atto suo? La fera, invida rabbia
D'Abner, non fassi al suo cospetto muta?
Tu stesso, allor che in te rientri, al solo
Apparir suo, non vedi i tuoi sospetti
Sparir, qual nebbia del pianeta al raggio?

SAUL

... Pur troppo,
Vero tu parli, inesplicabil cosa
Questo David per me. Non pria veduto

Sitôt que je le vis dans les champs de Jabès,
Il plut à mes regards, mais à mon cœur jamais.
Depuis ce temps, sans cesse, à moi-même contraire,
Je me cherche, et je suis pour moi-même un mystère,
J'ai vu flotter sur lui mes vœux et mes desseins:
Absent je le regrette, et présent je le crains.

. . . . . .

SAUL

Il semble qu'une main invisible et bizarre
Toujours vers lui m'attire, et toujours m'en sépare;
Mon cœur, quand je le hais, est près de le chérir,
Mon cœur, lorsque je l'aime, est prompt à le haïr.
Incroyable ascendant! répulsion funeste
Égarement de l'homme, ou vengeance céleste!
Je ne sais; mais du moins je vois trop clairement
Que des prêtres cruels David est l'instrument,

Io l'ebbi in Ela, che a' miei guardi ei piacque
Ma al cor non mai. Quando ad amarlo io presso
Quasi sarei, feroce sdegno piomba
In mezzo, e men divide: il voglio appena
Spento, s'io il veggo, ei mi disarma, e colma
Di meraviglia tanta, ch'io divento
Al suo cospetto un nulla.

. . . . . .

SAUL

. . . Ah! questa al certo,
Vendetta è questa, della man sovrana.
Or comincio a conoscerti, o tremenda
Mano. . . . Ma che? donde cagione io cerco?. . . .
Dio non l'offesi mai: vendetta è questa
De' sacerdoti. Egli è stromento, David,
Sacerdotale, iniquo. . . .
. . . In Rama ei vide
Samuel moribondo: a lui gli estremi
Detti parlava l'implacabil veglio.

Que dès longtemps, mon fils, ces prêtres me haïssent,
Qu'à l'ombre de l'autel leurs complots me trahissent,
Qu'ils menacent du ciel un vieillard malheureux
Qui ne voulut pas être aussi barbare qu'eux.
Mais David leur est cher: David, dès sa jeunesse,
Du vieillard de Rama cultiva la tendresse;
Samuel, qui l'aimait, expira dans ses bras;
On dit qu'il lui promit mon trône et mes États;
On dit plus, oui, l'on dit que la main du prophète
Versa l'huile des rois sur sa coupable tête;
S'il était vrai, mon fils!

Chi sa, chi sa, se il sacro olio celeste,
Ond'ei mia fronte unse già pria, versato
Non ha il fellon su la nemica testa?
Forse tu il sai . . Parla . . Ah! se il sai: favella.

In his fourth act, Alfieri does not make David appear again in the presence of Saul. After the terrible outburst of the last scene of the preceding act, Saul, having now entered a new phase of his madness, leading him to defiance and bravado, can no longer bear the sight of David.

Lamartine, on the contrary, places David again before Saul, who allows himself to be appeased by the acts of humility of the young

warrior. Soon after, however, Lamartine imitates Alfieri almost to the letter, both in the scene of Goliath's sword worn by David, and in that of Ahimelech's death.

To Saul, accusing him of pride and presumption, David answers:

DAVID

Je ne m'exalte point, je suis dans Israël
Le second après vous, et rien devant le ciel.

DAVIDE

. . . Io, me stimare? . . .
In campo
Non vil soldato, e tuo genero in corte
Mi tengo; e innanzi a Dio, nulla m' estimo.

SAUL

Mais tu n'ignores pas, que ses prêtres cruels
M'ont de ce Dieu terrible interdit les autels,
Que pour lui mon encens est un encens profane,
Que sa main me poursuit, que sa voix me condamne,
Que, puisqu'il se repent de m'avoir élu roi,
Il n'est rien de commun entre ton ciel et moi.
Pourquoi, si tu le sais, me tiens-tu ce langage?
Est-ce pour m'outrager?

. . . . .

SAUL

Ma sempre a me d'Iddio tu parli; eppure,
Ben tu il sai, da gran tempo, hammi partito
Da Dio l' astuta ira crudel, tremenda
De' sacerdoti . . .
Ad oltraggiarmi il nomi?

. . . . .

DAVID

C'est pour lui rendre hommage.
Et, pourquoi pensez-vous que, déja condamné,
Le Dieu qui vous choisit vous ait abandonné?
Il répond à toute heure au cœur qui s'humilie,
Et n'oublia jamais que l'ingrat qui l'oublie.
C'est lui qui, dès Jabès, vous prenant par la main,
Du trône, encore enfant, vous ouvrit le chemin . .
C'est lui qui, confondant l'errant Amalécite, . .
Jugera votre cause une seconde fois
Si votre cœur, fidèle à sa reconnaissance,
En lui, mais en lui seul, fonde son espérance.

DAVIDE

A dargli gloria, io 'l nomo.
Ah! perchè credi,
Ch'ei più non sia con te?
Con chi nol vuole,
Non sta: ma a chi l'invoca, a chi riposto
Tutto ha sè stesso in lui, manca egli mai?
Ei sul soglio chiamotti; ei vi ti tiene:
Sei suo, se in lui, ma se in lui sol, t'affidi.

Lamartine, however, gives a new turn to the action at this point and succeeds in creating a beautiful scene, which is one of the few that are really original in his tragedy.

In his fifth act also Lamartine departs from Alfieri's treatment. This act is rich in diversity of events, but Saul, who is the very soul of the tragedy, is not made as prominent, in his last struggles against himself and against destiny, as

in Alfieri's drama. The two tragedies might well be compared to two pictures, identical in subject, but in the one the protagonist appears in a high light, and being strikingly drawn and colored, attracts the spectator's whole attention, whereas in the other, though the protagonist occupies the centre of the canvas, he is not as strongly outlined, and the eye of the observer is attracted oftentimes by minor details.

CHAPTER II

La Mort de Jonathas *Jacopo Ortis* and *I Sepolcri* of Foscolo

It might be observed at this point that Lamartine had doubtless thought of giving a different ending to his *Saül*. We have an evidence of this in the fragment entitled *La Mort de Jonathas*,[1] which in some editions of Lamartine's works appears as the twelfth *Harmonie* of Book IV.[2]

From this fragment we might suppose that, Lamartine's interest not being strongly centered in Saul, he was led into making Jonathan the central figure of the closing scenes of his tragedy. Hence he had to select a different ending, and preserved this fragment under the appropriate title of *The Death of Jonathan*. Yet even a cursory reading proves that he meant to imitate Alfieri even in this. The character of Saul is here made altogether repellent. He is shown to be much more rebellious against God, much less generous toward David, than in the biblical narrative itself, and this is a grave infelicity. In

[1] *La Mort de Jonathas, fils de Saül*, fragment d'une tragédie biblique.

[2] E.g., *Harmonies*, Bruxelles, 1838.

the presence of his dying son, who exhorts him to repentance and to prayer, Saul accuses God of inhumanity and injustice, in language that culminates in open defiance:

Quoi ! ce nom détesté dans la bouche est encore?
Dieu le chérit ! . . . Eh bien ! c'est pourquoi je l'abhorre !

So he goes on, tormenting Jonathan's last moments by covering David with insults, menacing him with death, and even calling him a *coward:*

Il craint ce bras débile ! Il attend pour venir
Qu'un traître de ma perte aille le prévenir !

Jonathan can endure no more, and cries out in anguish:

. . . Au nom de mon heure suprême
Épargnez-moi !

But Saul continues with ever increasing insults against God:

Dieu cruel ! Dieu de sang ! Je te brave et t'outrage !
Tout ton pouvoir ne peut avilir mon courage !
Tu l'emportes, il est vrai; mais lorsque tu m'abats,
Je me relève encor pour insulter ton bras !
Je ne me repens pas des crimes de ma vie;
C'est toi qui les commis et qui les justifie.

All this is put in the mouth of an Israelite of the Davidic era ! Artistically speaking, a man who had been under the prophet Samuel's influence could never have pronounced words of

such a character, no matter how perverted he might become!

Hearing these horrible blasphemies, Jonathan cries out:

O blasphème! — Épargnez, Dieu clément! . . . o mon père!
Que cet égarement rend ma mort plus amère!

Soon after this he dies, and as the victorious shouts of the enemies are heard Saul slays himself.

Almost a year has elapsed since Lamartine returned to his native land, but his memories of Italy have not been dimmed. The *Saturnia tellus* from time to time presents itself to his imagination, surrounded with light and poetry. He recalls with regret the quiet evenings when, facing the sea on the veranda of the little cottage where the beauty of Graziella was blooming, he used to read the *Ultime Lettere di Jacopo Ortis* while the fisherman's family were enjoying the music of the exquisite language flowing from his lips. "Te souviens-tu" — he writes to de Virieu — "des lettres de Jacopo Ortis que nous lisions ensemble à Naples? Sais-tu qu'il y a là-dedans du vrai *génie*, du véritable sentiment et du plus vigoureux? Je les relis avec délice et je pleure en les lisant."[3]

[3] *Corr.*, I, 214.

Lamartine always preserved great admiration for Ugo Foscolo, and till his late years, when he dictated his *Cours familier de littérature*, he was pleased to find a kind of affinity between himself and the singer of *I Sepolcri*, of whom he traces the portrait in this fashion: "un génie avorté dans la misère et dans la proscription, qui tenait à la foi de Dante, de Goethe, de Byron et de Pétrarque." [4]

After his journey to Italy, which, as has been said, made of him a new man by revealing to him a world unknown before, and after having felt the powerful influence of the original intellect of Foscolo, Lamartine writes to de Virieu an epistle in verse, in which he tries to imitate *I Sepolcri*. The French poet's composition is much shorter than that of Foscolo. He puts in a few verses concepts which Foscolo evolves at length, but the imitation is quite apparent and striking, as will be seen at the first glance:

A l'ombre des ciprès arrosés par des pleurs
Le sommeil de la mort a-t-il autant d'horreurs?
. . . . .
Vain mortel! Tout se tait à cet instant suprême,

All'ombra dei cipressi e dentro l'urne
Confortate di pianto, è forse il sonno
Della morte men duro?
. . . . .
Vero è ben Pindemonte! Anche la speme

[4] *Cours familier detti.*, entr. XXII, p. 144.

La nuit tombe, tout fuit, et l'espérance même
Qui jusques au sépulcre accompagne nos pas
S'arrête sur le seuil, et ne le franchit pas. . . .
Insensé qui rempli d'orgueil systématique
Du préjugé sacré brise le sceptre antique,
Et qui toujours armé du froid raisonnement
Donne tout au calcul, et rien au sentiment.[5]

Ultima dea, fugge i sepolcri e involve
Tutte cose l'oblio nella sua notte. . . .
Sol chi non lascia eredità di affetti
Poca gioia ha dell'urna . .

To Lamartine his own verses seem to be "bien frappés, et assez bien pensés." They may be so, but what a difference between the pure sculptural beauty of form of the Italian model, and the vagueness of thought and artificiality of the imitation. Only a man as presumptuous as Lamartine could undertake so audacious an enterprise. Truly,

Inquinat egregios adjuncta superbia mores. [6]

[5] *Corr.*, I, 211. [6] Quintilian.

CHAPTER III

JULIA'S DEATH AND LAMARTINE'S IMITATIONS OF PETRARCH — HIS IDEAS OF COLONIZATION — HIS MARRIAGE — ROME AND NAPLES.

The period from 1813 to 1820 is of minor interest to us. However, we must not forget that during this time was developed Lamartine's love for Julia, the woman who inspired him to write *Le Crucifix*.

When Julia died, the immense passion which Lamartine had felt for her became a kind of religion to him, and then it was that Petrarch, whom up to this time Lamartine had not very well understood or appreciated, became his favorite poet. In him, indeed, he found feelings and emotions akin to his own. From this time on he borrows from the Italian poet images and similes. In Lamartine's use of them, however, they become quite transformed and take on a new originality and individuality.

We must notice, however, that Lamartine had been reading and translating Petrarch ten years before the publication of the *Méditations*. As early as September, 1810, he had borrowed from

him two verses which he used as a superscription for a letter which he wrote upon *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.[1] On March 28, 1813, he writes to de Virieu:

> Je lis des sonnets de Pétrarque, que je n'entendais guère en Italie et que je trouvais mauvais. Je les entends maintenant comme du Français, je ne sais pourquoi, et j'y trouve des choses ravissantes. Il y a un temps pour tout, et telle disposition de l'âme ou de l'esprit nous donne de la repugnance ou du goût pour un homme ou pour un livre. Nous sommes vraiment de singuliers instruments montés aujourd'hui sur un ton, demain sur un autre; et moi surtout qui change d'idées et de goût selon le vent qu'il fait, et le plus ou moins d'élasticité de l'air.[2]

The pocket edition of Petrarch which Lamartine always carried with him since Petrarch had become his favorite poet, contains, written in pencil on the margin and on the blank pages bound at the end of the volume, a number of verses, many of them never yet published, which give an illustration of the way in which he understood and translated the Italian poet.

The comparison of the following charming fragment, recovered by M. Léon Séché, with Petrarch's original, will give a good idea of Lamartine's method:

[1] Cf. L. Séché, *Lamartine*, p. 167.
[2] *Corr.*, I, 218.

LAMARTINE	PETRARCH
Vallon rempli de mes accords,	Valle che de' lamenti miei se' piena;
Ruisseau dont mes pleurs troublaient l'onde,	Fiume che spesso del mio pianger cresci,
Prés verdoyants, forêt profonde,	Fere silvestre, vaghi augelli e pesci,
Oiseaux qui chantiez sur ses bords;	Che l'una e l'altra verde riva affrena;
Zéphir qu'embaumait son haleine,	Aria de' miei sospir calda e serena,
Sentier où sa trace autrefois	Dolce sentier, che sì amaro riesci,
Me guidait sous l'ombre des bois	Colle che mi piacesti, or mi rincresci,
Où l'habitude me ramène !	Ov' ancor per usanza Amor mi mena,
Ce temps n'est plus, mon œil glacé	Ben riconosco in voi l'usate forme,
Vous cherchant à travers ses larmes,	Non lasso, in me; che da sì lieta vita
Sur vos bords jadis pleins de charmes	Son fatto albergo d'infinita doglia.
Ne retrouve plus le passé.	
La colline est pourtant plus belle,	Quinci vedea 'l mio bene; e per quest' orme
L'air est plus riant que jamais;	Torno a veder ond' al ciel nuda è gita,
Ah ! je le vois, ce que j'aimais,	Lasciando in terra la sua bella spoglia.
Ce n'était pas vous, c'était elle.[3]	

[3] Cf. also Chap. VIII, Part III of this Essay.

Evidently Lamartine's composition is a translation, or rather a happy adaptation, of the Italian original, but how free and how transformed. In it we have already the subject of *l'Isolement*, and perhaps these four stanzas were, so to speak, the first draft of that beautiful poem itself.[4]

After the death of Julia and Lamartine's return to his father's home, the young poet spent many sad days without hope or comfort. Speaking after the manner of the afflicted, his only desire was to die quickly, but fortunately the resiliency of youth, and Time, the great healer, triumphed, and he began to care for life again.[5] He did not look for a brilliant future, but among the plans of tragedies and poems which continually occupied his time, he conceived a very strange design: He proposed to de Virieu (who

[4] Cf. Séché, p. 168.

[5] This period of Lamartine's life is characterized by the poet himself as "... L'époque voluptueuse de ma vie, voluptueuse et immorale, entre mon amour que je pleurais, et mon mariage que je pressentais" (Des Cognets, *La Vie intérieure de Lam.*, p. 100). And it seems that, between his two loves, there remained a place for a third, "une Elvire vivante qui n'était pas Mlle Birch," as Lanson puts it. The object of this love seems to have been a Roman princess, "Italienne de grande origine, de beauté rayonnante, de grâce ineffable" according to Lamartine's own description. But this passion appears to have been as shortlived as it was strong for a time. (Cf. Lanson, *op. cit.*, Introd., xliv and ref.)

was then secretary of the French embassy at Monaco) that they should together colonize the island of Pianosa:

> Facing Leghorn — he writes to his friend — there is a little island six leagues in circumference, entirely uncultivated and belonging to nobody. It is very fertile, but the Italians either do not know it or do not care. We will ask for the concession of it from the government; we will gather all the money we possess, we will convey there teams, donkeys, mules, and we will sow corn. We will build huts, and we will form a little place of refuge for ourselves and for our friends. [6]

On another occasion he proposed to some other friends, the de Veydels, to colonize together a little island in the Bay of Naples, called *l'Isoletta!*

But these strange schemes failed of accomplishment. The poet was destined to return once more to Naples, under circumstances and conditions very different from those in which he had before found himself. In 1820 occurred his marriage. His wife, Elisabeth Birch, an Englishwoman whom he had met at Aix, was not beautiful, but had excellent qualities both of heart and of mind, and he greatly esteemed and admired her. The wedding was celebrated at Chambéry, whence the young couple proceeded to Turin, where de Virieu was at that time secretary of the French embassy. Their design was to go to

[6] *Corr.*, II, 5.

Naples, stopping at Florence and Rome. The Countess of Albany again welcomed Lamartine to Florence after ten years of absence. Florence, with all its art treasures, fascinated the young bride, who like most of her fellow countrywomen was enthusiastic for Italian art.

But Naples, the city where the poet was about to assume his office at the French embassy, was then full of political strife. The people demanded of the old Bourbon King, Ferdinand, a constitution similar to that which had already been granted by the government of Spain. It was a dangerous moment, and the new secretary of the embassy was compelled to leave his wife in Rome, where "il y a de quoi enivrer et étourdir le monde." The eternal city always occupied a prominent place in our poet's thoughts, so that even while still in France, in the early days of March, 1819, he had written "une *Méditation* politico-poétique sur Rome," but as he feared that the ideas therein expressed "ne le feraient pas protéger," he withheld it from a little volume of his verses which he was then publishing.[7] At Rome the monument by Canova and St. Peter's dome are "les deux points où l'on revient

[7] In order to fill the vacant place, he substituted *à contre-cœur* another "petite ode," the counterpart of an earlier piece entitled *Le Malheur* (*Corr.*, II, 39).

toujours," while Naples henceforth had become to Lamartine "le pays de la pure et brutale volupté: Naples ressemble plus à l'Asie qu'à l'Italie; il n'y a que les délices du corps, l'air, la vue, le ciel, et la paresse, mais les délices de l'imagination sont ici" (that is, in Rome.)[8] A few years earlier Lamartine would never have made such a remark. Sorrow had already begun to subdue in him the passions of early youth.

To this period of his life would properly belong, if real, an incident which he relates in one of his letters to M. Dargand, recently published by Des Cognets. It seems that his *Princesse Italienne*, the *Elvire vivante* who, according to Professor Lanson, filled the gap in his experience between the dead Julie and Miss Birch, had sworn revenge when hearing of his marriage. Accordingly she caused him to be assaulted on the way from Rome to Naples, "non par des brigands vulgaires mais par des spadassins," from whom he escaped because, as he expresses it, "mon étoile me sauva." — This seems also to be confirmed by a letter of his mother who, hearing of his reported death, wrote: "Je sais par son ami M. de Virieu, qu'il redoutait de revoir en Italie une personne qui ne lui pardonnait pas son mariage. Serait-ce cela? ou autre

[8] *Corr.*, II, 115.

chose? ou rien?" But very soon a letter from Lamartine himself assured her that all was well. Des Cognets also believes that there is an allusion to these events in the *Nouvelles Confidences*[9] and that we have an echo of the Princess's feelings in the imprecations of Regina when abandoned by Saluce.[10] However this may be, the fact remains that Lamartine's death was reported by the newspapers throughout France, and made a great sensation, which soon was turned into irony at our poet's expense, when the truth became known. Later on he seems to have succeeded in appeasing the wrath of the "Princess" who, becoming reconciled to the fact of his marriage, changed her feelings of jealousy and revenge into those of friendship and admiration for him!

[9] Livre II, Chap. III.

[10] Des Cognets, *La Vie intérieure de Lam.*, p. 124.

CHAPTER IV

LAMARTINE AND THE CARBONARI — MEETING WITH GIOACCHINO ROSSINI — AMALFI AND THE SO-CALLED *CALABRIAN SONG*

THE decision to leave his wife at Rome was a wise one, as Lamartine found some difficulty in crossing the borders of the papal kingdom. In fact, beyond Terracina the road was crowded with companies of *volontarii* who thought only of obeying their own caprice. Happily they saw in Lamartine a diplomatic agent of the French government, on which they counted to back the insurrection against the "Holy Alliance." Thanks to this mistake Lamartine reached Naples the night preceding the day when General Pepe, at the head of an army of Calabrian and Neapolitan insurgents, entered the Capital. The situation was a difficult one for French diplomacy. The question was between constitutional and absolute government in the Italian states subject to Austria. It seemed natural that France should interpose as mediator between the kings and the peoples, to prevent foreign powers from interfering at Naples (and later on at Turin) in aid of absolutism and against

free institutions. France herself had adopted the constitutional régime, and it would have been illogical not to protect in other states what she protected within her own borders. French diplomacy, therefore, could not help but lean, at least moderately, toward the constitutional cause at Naples. On the other side the revolutionary movement was, more than anything else, an explosion within the army — an explosion which had been prepared by the secret society of the Carbonari.

The French embassy at this juncture was headed by the Duke of Narbonne, who, as Lamartine himself tells us, was a modest and timid man, but full of common sense and very kind-hearted. He received our young diplomat into the embassy as a member of the family. The first secretary, M. de Fontenay, was a gentleman from Autun, and therefore from the same region whence Lamartine originally came. These two immediately became intimate, and together they acquired experience in handling the difficult situation created by the state of affairs at Naples. We see from the *Correspondance* of Lamartine that they were bound together by real friendship and mutual esteem. When the troubles had calmed to some extent, on July 29, 1820, Lamartine rejoined his wife at Rome, with the pur-

pose of bringing her back with him to Naples. But, strange to say, the delightful impression which Naples had made upon the poet during his first sojourn in 1811, did not renew itself on this occasion. It was the Carbonari that made all the difference! Lamartine missed Florence, because Naples had now become to him "le chaos, rien n'en sort. Il faut se contenter de la volupté des yeux et du divin climat." "Naples," he exclaims, "is no more Naples; there are clubs of the Carbonari even in the temples of Baia and Pozzuoli! Liberty is beautiful, but it was preferable upon the Capitol, rather than on these delicious shores of the Campania, where one expects to find only pleasures, rest and songs." [1]

Who knows but that—at a much later date, when he was the arbiter of France's destiny — Lamartine's lack of enthusiasm for the idea of Italian unity, which was the cherished aim of all his friends of Italy, may have been due to the influence of this early unfavorable impression made upon him by the Carbonari? Incidents apparently trifling often left an indelible trace on his sensitive and emotional nature, and this would be at least a possible and perhaps a plausible explanation.

[1] *Corr.*, II, 118.

However, the poet's life was delightful to him even then; his conjugal happiness was perfect, as a result of the ever growing affection with which his companion gradually inspired him, and of the expectation of his approaching paternity. During this time the happy pair became acquainted with an Italian lady of high rank, the Marchioness Gagliati; but more especially we have to note the acquaintance of Lamartine with Gioacchino Rossini, who at the time was still very poor and almost unknown. Their meeting took place in the reception hall of the Duchess d'Alba. The poet at first did not pay any particular attention to the young musician, who was trying his earliest footsteps on the road to glory; but Rossini himself, without having been introduced, approached the young diplomat. Lamartine writes of him as follows:

Il était un beau jeune homme au visage mâle, à l'œil mélancolique, mais ferme, comme celui d'un homme qui a la conscience que sa tristesse est un génie. Il me tendit une main fraternelle avec un geste à la fois hardi et bienveillant; puis d'une voix sonore, concentrée, tragique, mais avec un accent légèrement transalpin, il me récita quelques strophes de la méditation, le *Désespoir* qui venait de paraître à Paris. . . .[2]

Afterwards Rossini mentioned his name. It is

[2] *Harmonies*, etc., in *Œuvres Complètes de L., ed. crit.*, IV, 238 (*Encore un hymne*).

easy to understand that to Lamartine this was the most pleasant and gratifying sort of a surprise that could have happened at an Italian reception. From that time on he had for Rossini the greatest feelings of admiration. To continue the above quotation, Lamartine calls him "le plus délicieux génie du temps," and describes his music as "ce cantique sans paroles, dont une seule note vaut tous nos vers."

Doubtless the beautiful music of Rossini's operas must have had something to do with the inspiration of our poet, though we are unable to define when and how far this may have been the case.

During his sojourn at Naples Lamartine paid frequent visits to the neighboring cities, among them Amalfi, where he must have remained for some time, if we are to believe his own statement, and Prof. Lanson observes that the visit in question would most naturally belong to this period of our poet's career. Amalfi, with its picturesque old cathedral, with the vestiges of its ancient maritime greatness, may surely have attracted a poet such as Lamartine, but we cannot so easily accept the reality of the experience he relates in connection with his visit. "There is a fragment of national poetry in Calabria," he says, "which I have often heard sung by the women of Amalfi

as they were returning from the fountain. Some time ago I translated it in verse form, and these verses seem to apply to the subject I am now treating, so that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of inserting them here." The place in which he inserted them is an essay entitled *Des destinées de la poésie* which appeared as a second preface to the edition of the *Méditations* of 1849, although the essay was written in 1834. Lamartine's geography is here entirely at fault, since Amalfi never belonged to Calabria but to Campania, and such a mistake is difficult to understand on the part of one familiar with the places which he mentions. Yet since our poet was writing years after the event took place, we may impute the error to his habitual carelessness. But what we cannot believe is his having heard a Calabrian national song familiarly repeated by the women of Amalfi, and his having copied and translated it. The dialects of Calabria are very different in construction, vocabulary and especially in pronunciation from that of Amalfi, which is purely Neapolitan, while the former are closely connected with Sicilian! Lamartine must have been unaware of this when he made his assertion. And when could he himself have mastered the Calabrian dialect well enough to write out a song from the lips of a washerwoman, not to mention

his having translated it?[3] We notice, furthermore, that the metre which Lamartine has chosen, evidently in order to imitate the original Calabrian, granting that such an original really existed, is totally unlike the metres habitually found in popular songs of Southern Italy. A glance at the first stanza will be sufficient for our purpose:

Quand, assise à douze ans à l'angle du verger,
Sous les citrons en fleurs ou les amandiers roses,
Le souffle du printemps sortait de toutes choses,
Et faisait sur mon cou mes boucles voltiger,
Une voix me parlait, si douce au fond de l'âme
Qu'un frisson de plaisir en courait sur ma peau.
Ce n'était nulle voix d'enfant, d'homme ou de femme,

C'était vous, c'était vous, ô mon Ange gardien,
C'était vous dont le cœur déjà parlait au mien!

[3] The following is a stanza of a real Calabrian song by the famous Calabrian poet Vincenzo Padula, with the translation in Neapolitan. If it were sung, the differences of pronunciation would greatly increase the dissimilarity:

Calabrian	Neapolitan
Si scippava de lu sinnu	Se strappaïe d' o' seno
Propriu 'u figliu, e cud' amuri	Propio o' figlio, e co' amore
Ci 'u dunau cumu nu milu	Jë dette come 'na mela
E li dissi "tenitilu!"	E ie dicette "tenetella"
Ma tramenti chi si suonna	Ma 'ntanto che chilla suogna
Pe' lu prieju, e pe' lu trillu	P' a' gioia e l' allerezza
Si risbiglia la Madonna	Se sceta a' Maronna
E si guarda e lu milillu	E varda a' la melella.

—(*La notte di Natale*)

Professor Lanson observes: "Mon collègue et ami M. Henry Hauvette, a bien voulu demander pour moi à quelques-uns de ses amis italiens des éclaircissements sur l'original italien de ces vers. Personne n'a pu le découvrir." If we are correct in our deductions the obvious answer is that such an original never existed, and that the whole story is one of the many genial inventions of Lamartine, who wanted to give a romantic and interesting background to the verses, which he must have composed for the occasion, as they fit his subject too well to be a mere coincidence!

There remains, however, another important question to be answered. If Lamartine had invented the story *ab imis fundamentis* what need had he to pretend that his verses were a "translation" of a popular song of Southern Italy? Was there not something in his mind, at least, which suggested to him the idea of putting his song in the mouth of a young woman from Southern Italy, as if he had actually "translated" it from the Italian? — To get at the source of Lamartine's inspiration we must transport ourselves to the environment where he was living at the time he composed the "essay" in which the verses are found. Now, we have discovered an interesting passage in a letter he wrote to his friend, M. D'Ouilly, in which he describes how

and where he composed his verses, at the particular period of his career referred to:

. . . Quand donc l'année politique a fini, quand la chambre, les conseils généraux de département etc. me laissent deux mois seul et libre dans cette chère masure de Saint Point que vous connaissez, et où vous avez osé coucher quelquefois sous une tour qui tremble aux coups du vent d'ouest, ma vie de poëte recommence pour quelques jours. . . . Je m'assieds près de la vieille table de chêne où mon père et mon grand-père se sont assis. Elle est couverte de livres froissés par eux et par moi: leur vieille Bible, un grand Pétrarque in-4° . . . un Homère, un Virgile, un volume de lettres de Cicéron, un tome dépareillé de Chateaubriand, de *Goethe*, de Byron, tous philosophes ou poëtes. Au milieu de tous ces volumes poudreux et épars, quelques feuilles de beau papier blanc, des crayons et des plumes qui invitent à crayonner et à écrire. Le coude appuyé sur la table et la tête sur la main, le cœur gros de sentiments et de souvenirs, . . . je me dis: "Écrivons." Comme je ne sais pas écrire en prose, faute de métier et d'habitude, j'écris des vers.[4]

This explains to us, in the first place, why, in the midst of his "essay," he introduces his poem as soon as the ideas he wanted to express become too lofty for mere prose. But, more important still, he tells us that Goethe was one of his familiar authors, whose volume was lying upon his work-table, "froissé" by his constant use of it. Now one of the most remarkable

[4] Préface to the *Recueillements poétiques*, éd. Hachette, Paris, 1863.

heroines of that great poet is a young woman, from Southern Italy, who sings a beautiful song about springtime in her native land, which in its expressions, in its subject and even in its metrical arrangement resembles so closely the first stanza of Lamartine's *Calabrian song* already quoted, that the conviction logically follows that Lamartine must have (consciously or unconsciously, we cannot absolutely affirm) imitated it! It is not to any Italian original, but to the German of Goethe's *Mignon* that we have to look for the inspiration of Lamartine's *Calabrian song*.

The singer is the same, a young woman; the country is the same, Southern Italy; the subject is the same, a garden in springtime; the expressions are the same, "les citrons en fleurs," the "souffle du printemps," etc.; and the meter is practically the same:

Kennst du das Land, wo die Citronen blühn?

And even the striking refrain:

"C'était vous, c'était vous, ô mon Ange gardien,"

strongly suggests Goethe's:

Dahin! Dahin! möcht' ich, o mein Geliebter, ziehn.

Yet, after all, this implies once again that it is the thought of Italy and Graziella that strikes most his imagination, even while reading a foreign author, for he cannot have failed to see the analogy between Mignon and his early love!

CHAPTER V

"LA SENTINELLA" — LAMARTINE AND THE DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE

Those days at Naples were happy ones for Lamartine and his wife. They were well satisfied with each other's company, yet the poet lamented the lack of congenial friends, not so much on account of himself as on account of his mother-in-law, Mrs. Birch, who caused the young couple to feel the effects of her ill-humor. As the autumn was approaching they had rented a little villa at Ischia, the beautiful isle so dear to the poet, the isle which inspired him with some of his sweetest lyrical themes and once again when he wrote the *Confidences*. The villa was called "La Sentinella" and was surrounded by grape vines; while the Epomeo, the volcanic mountain which continually menaces the island, dominated it.

During his sojourn at Ischia Lamartine visited Naples nearly every day for the business of his office. Coming back, he used to jump into a boat at Pozzuoli, which he himself rowed, and as he

reached the shore he would find his young wife waiting for him. Together they climbed the path leading to the villa, across the vineyards, and in that quietude, the more appreciated by reason of the vicinity of the tumultuous city, they enjoyed happiness without a cloud:

Viens: l'amoureux silence occupe au loin l'espace;
Viens, du soir près de moi respirer la fraîcheur!
C'est l'heure: à peine au loin la voile qui s'efface
Blanchit, en ramenant le paisible pêcheur . . .
. . . Et nous, aux doux penchants de ces verts Élysées
Sur ces bords où l'Amour eût caché son Éden:
Au murmure plaintif des vagues apaisées,
Aux rayons endormis de l'astre élyséen;
Sous ce ciel où la vie, où le bonheur abonde,
Sur ces rives que l'œil se plaît à parcourir
Nous avons respiré cet air d'un autre monde
Elise! . . . Et cependant on dit qu'il faut mourir!

Thus sang Lamartine at this time, and throughout the tender lyric poem he is picturing himself and his companion. "En 1821 je passai l'été dans l'île d'Ischia avec la jeune femme que je venais d'épouser. J'étais heureux; j'avais besoin de chanter, comme tout ce qui déborde d'émotions calmes." [1]

The *Chant d'amour* belongs also to this period. It is a "polymetric" composition, sparkling here and there with beautiful biblical images. This

[1] *Nouvelles méd. poét.* in *Œuvres compl.*, III, 285.

exquisite song again exalts the sweetness of a pure and chaste love, that of the husband for his wife:

Pourquoi de tes regards percer ainsi mon âme?
Baisse, oh! baisse tes yeux pleins d'une chaste flamme:
Baisse-les, ou je meurs!
Viens, plutôt, lève-toi! Mets ta main dans la mienne;
Que mon bras arrondi t'entoure et te soutienne
Sur ces tapis de fleurs.

Lamartine was also the poet of the sea, and at Naples and Ischia, in particular, he felt the mysterious fascination of the waves overlapping and overcoming each other, gathering in rhythmic swells, speaking to the soul vaguely of the unknown, of other worlds and planets:

De l'infini sublime image,
De flot en flot l'œil emporté
Te suit en vain de plage en plage:
L'esprit cherche en vain ton rivage
Comme ceux de l'éternité.[2]

Thus he sang to the sea which bathed his dear island, the guardian of his happiness. Oftentimes husband and wife took walks through the island, carrying with them only books in Italian with crayons and sketch-books. The poet, seated upon the grass and caressed by the glances and smiles of his youthful bride, used to give written

[2] *Nouv. méd. poétiques*, (*Adieux à la mer*).

expression to the brilliant inspirations which came to him from so many sources. But he himself confesses that the serenity of his horizon was dimmed by one cloud, the memory of Graziella. Seeing from afar the ruins of her house on the neighboring island of Procida, recollections as poignant as remorse assailed him. "Mais la jeunesse a des végétations qui recouvrent tout, même les tombes." [3]

A little later he wrote to de Virieu:

> Enfin j'ai jeté l'ancre pour toujours, et si jamais un destin comme on n'en voit pas me donne plus d'argent que je n'en pourrais manger, m'accorde plus de douze mois dans l'année, j'en viendrai régulièrement passer sept ou huit ici. Ischia c'est le chef-d'œuvre de la baie de Naples, de l'Italie, du monde; c'est le séjour complet rêvé si souvent par nous, et reconnu quelquefois en details, ici ou là: mais ici c'est lui tout entier.[4]

And in the "commentaire" to the *Méditation* which bears the name of the island: "C'est l'île de mon cœur, c'est l'oasis de ma jeunesse, c'est le repos de ma maturité. Je voudrais que cela fût le recueillement de mon soir, s'il vient un soir!"

Words more enthusiastic than these could hardly be found to describe Lamartine's feelings

[3] *Cours familier de litt.*, entr. CXXIII, p. 199.
[4] *Corr.*, II, 133.

toward this beautiful part of Italy. In October the young couple returned to Naples, and there Lamartine wrote his famous ode to the Duke of Bordeaux,[5] and though the season was declining, yet the beauty of the place held him with the same fascination as ten years before. But the revolution which for some time had been preparing, finally broke out at Naples. Such a condition of affairs was very unfavorable to a woman who was in the period of childbirth, as was M^me^ de Lamartine. Her husband, therefore, brought her to Rome, where, on May 8, 1821, Alphonse was born. He was baptized at St. Peter's, and his god-father was the marquis Gagliati. This was one of the happiest periods in the life of the poet. The little child was fine and strong, and his own mother nursed him. The health also of the parents had greatly improved after the change of climate; finally, they found in Rome that cultured and elegant society which they had missed so much at Naples. The birth of the child in Rome constituted an additional bond of affection between the poet and Italy.

[5] Professor G. Lanson observes that this ode "fut faite sans enthousiasme. . . . Sous le ciel de Naples, avec sa jeune femme, au milieu des souvenirs idéalisés de son premier voyage, la politique intérieure de son pays ne l'intéressait plus guère." (Introd. lix. Cf. *Corr.*, II, p. 142, ed. 1881–2.)

In Rome dwelt the Duchess of Devonshire, protector of all literary and artistic geniuses, in whose palace met the choicest and most refined society that one could desire. All her immense wealth was employed in endeavoring to bring about a second Renaissance in Italy, and men like Alexander Humboldt and Canova were frequent visitors at her palace.

The life which her friends led was really worthy of them. In the morning they started out from the studios of the most celebrated artists, to visit excavations and ruins such as those of the Golden House of Nero and the other great relics and monuments of ancient art. In the evening they listened to the delightful melodies of Rossini at the famous Teatro Tordinona. Then, with their souls still saturated with that music, they continued the night in the drawing-rooms of the Duchess, among the diplomats from the principal European courts and amid the swarm of famous artists, who, as in the time of Leo X, mingled freely with the mightiest. Sometimes Lamartine was asked to recite some of the *Méditations* which he had composed the evening before while amidst the spell of the murmur of the picturesque waterfalls of Tivoli. One of those that were thus recited was *La branche d'amandier*, which was suggested to him by the gentle act of

a young girl who, as he was passing through Albano in the month of February while all the neighboring hills were smiling with peach and almond blossoms, plucked a branch in full bloom and threw it into Lamartine's coach with a wish of good fortune.[6]

Late in the night, the guests of the Duchess of Devonshire would return to her palace after having contemplated the spectral moonlit forms of the Pantheon or the Colosseum. The enthusiasm of Lamartine for the antiquity and the greatness of Rome and Roman art grew with each of these visits and lifted him up to the highest planes of intellectuality.

In the month of April the poet left Rome, and before his departure he addressed to the Duchess the *Méditation* entitled *La liberté, ou une nuit à Rome*, a hymn to liberty inspired by the ruins of ancient Rome. At this time also he wrote the *Méditation* entitled *Le lézard*. The latter poem was suggested to Lamartine in the following striking and original manner. One day he was alone in the Colosseum seated upon the grass, reading Tacitus and contemplating the images which his reading brought before his mental vision. While engaged in these musings his eyes were almost unconsciously recomposing

[6] *Nouvelles méd. poét.*, XVI. (Comment.)

the letters of the name of Augustus, engraved upon the wall:

J'en épelais le premier signe;
Mais, déconcertant mes regards,
Un lézard dormait sur la ligne
Où brillait le nom des Césars.

. . . . . .

Consul, César, maître du monde,
Pontife, Auguste, égal aux dieux,
L'ombre de ce reptile immonde
Éclipsait ta gloire à mes yeux!
La nature a son ironie:
Le livre échappa de ma main.
O Tacite, tout ton génie
Raille moins fort l'orgueil humain!

CHAPTER VI

LAMARTINE AND CHARLES ALBERT — THE *CINQUE MAGGIO*

THE new political conditions in the kingdom of Naples after the return of King Ferdinand, did not permit the French government to keep there the same diplomatic representatives that had been present during the revolutionary movement. Thus Lamartine received an indefinite leave of absence of which he took advantage by returning to France. He departed in the spring, taking the road to Florence by way of Narni and Terni. At that time, after the defeat inflicted by the Austrians at Novara on the so-called "Constitutional Army," Charles Albert, then prince of Savoia-Carignano, had been compelled by his uncle, Charles Felix, to retire to Florence as a penalty for his liberal tendencies. The young prince was living in solitude, occupying one of the wings of the Pitti Palace. Having been told that the French poet and diplomat, Lamartine, was in Florence, the prince sent his secretary, Silvano de Costa, who was a friend of Lamartine's, requesting of him a secret interview and stating

that the prince was disposed to come in person to the poet's house. Lamartine, however, did not allow the exiled prince thus to derogate from his dignity, but went in person to present his homage to him at the Pitti Palace.[1]

Lamartine knew the history of Charles Albert and the attempt he had made at Novara. He always blamed the uncertain character of that prince — ever halting and hesitating even during the unfolding of the events which brought about the liberty and independence of Italy. Many years afterwards, the poet wrote one of the severest judgments that have ever been pronounced on the political conduct of Charles Albert, and later still he fought against the political annexation of the Italian provinces to the kingdom of Piedmont. This was at the time when he himself was one of the members of the provisional government which controlled the destinies of France. This dictum of Lamartine's drew forth a letter from Alessandro Manzoni in behalf of the Italian patriots. We quote here a few passages tending to show the intimate relationship of affection and of mutual respect which existed between these two poets, notwithstanding their political disagreement:

[1] Lamartine himself remarks, apropos of this episode, that although it sounds incredible it is nevertheless true.

Cher Lamartine,

... cette Italie que vous aimez et dont vous êtes aimé, n'avez vous pas senti, grand et bon Lamartine, qu'il n'y avait pas de mots plus durs à lui jeter que celui de diversité, et que ce mot, prononcé par vous comme un mot d'avenir résume pour elle un long passé de malheur et d'abaissement? Mais cette diversité n'a pas pour cause le peuple de l'Italie, car il n'y a pas plus de différence entre l'homme des Alpes et celui de Palermo, qu'entre l'homme des bords du Rhin et celui des Pyrénées.... Mais ici (j'ose vous le dire avec la franchise à laquelle le pouvoir dont vous êtes investi vous donne un droit de plus), ici vous êtes allé au delà, vous avez fait plus que ménager.... Adieu, cher poète, car vous ne parviendrez pas à faire oublier ce titre-là. Vous avez ici, parmi la foule des personnes qui pensent à vous, un vieux ami, un chrétien, qui incapable de par sa nature de se mêler activement aux grandes affaires de ce monde, a plus de temps pour implorer l'assistance de Dieu sur ceux qui en sont chargés. [2]

In his passage through Florence on his way back from Rome, Lamartine was loaded with kindnesses by the Marquis de la Maisonfort, French ambassador to the Tuscan court, a gentleman whom he had often reason to thank, especially in his official relationship. The intervals of time which he could spare between his sojourn at Naples and that at Florence, lasting altogether from December, 1820, to August, 1828,[3] Lamar-

[2] Gius. Massari in *Fanfulla della Domenica*, 14 Genn., 1883.

[3] Cf. G. Lanson, *Les Méditations de Lamartine*, II, p. 416, note.

tine spent at Milly, whence he paid a visit to England in order to get acquainted with his wife's relatives. But he was continually longing for the Italian climate and the Italian sky. He wrote at this time:

Ah ! qui m'importera sur les tièdes rivages
Où l'Arne couronné de ses pâles ombrages
Aux murs des Médicis en sa course arrêté,
Réfléchit les palais par la Muse habités
Et semble au bruit flatteur de son onde plus lente
Murmurer les grands noms de Pétrarque et de Dante.[4]

From Mâcon, on February 5, 1822, he wrote to de Virieu, then at Turin, asking him to send him the ode composed by Manzoni on the death of Napoleon. His friend forwarded to him, along with it, the tragedy *Adelchi*, and this is the judgment that Lamartine pronounced on Manzoni's two works:

Je te remercie de tes deux envois poétiques: J'ai été bien plus content que je ne m'y attendais de l'ode de Manzoni: je fais peu de cas de sa tragédie, son ode est parfaite. Il n'y manque rien de tout ce qui est pensée, style, et sentiment; il n'y manque qu'une plume plus riche et plus éclatante en poésie. Car, remarque une chose, c'est qu'elle est aussi belle en prose, et, peut-être plus. Mais n'importe, je voudrais l'avoir faite. J'y avais souvent pensé, et puis le temps présent m'en a empêché.[5]

[4] *Corr.*, II, 177.
[5] *Corr.*, II, 192.

But the idea which had come to him before, he put later on into practice and, following Manzoni's footsteps, he wrote the *Méditation* entitled *Bonaparte*, which, if it does not surpass, equals at least the *Cinque Maggio*. In his comment he makes no mention of the model which he imitated; but in a letter to de Virieu, dated June 22, 1824, Lamartine confesses his indebtedness to Manzoni.

It was fortunate for Lamartine that he wrote his ode as late as 1823 (as may be seen from the manuscript, though in the commentary he pretends to have written it in 1821), because, as Léon Séché puts it, "S'il l'avait composée sous l'impression fraîche et immédiate de celle de Manzoni, il lui aurait sans doute emprunté davantage." [6] As it is, his borrowings from Manzoni in this ode are quite limited, as may be seen from the following comparison:

LAMARTINE	MANZONI
Jamais d'aucun mortel le pied qu'un souffle efface	... Nè sa quando una simile
N'imprima sur la terre une aussi forte trace,	Orma di piè mortale
Et ce pied s'est arrêté là! (3d stanza)	La sua cruenta polvere A calpestar verrà. (1st stanza)

[6] Séché, *Lamartine*, p. 172.

. . . Et que ton nom *jouet d'un eternel orage* . . .
(26th stanza)

. . . . . .

Ne crains pas, cependant, ombre encore inquiète,
Que je vienne outrager ta majesté muette,
Non, *la lyre au tombeau n'a jamais insulté.*
(5th stanza)

. . . . . .

Ce siècle dont l'écume entraînait dans sa course
Les mœurs, les rois, les dieux . . . refoulé vers sa source
Recula d'un pas devant toi.
(7th stanza)

Ainsi dans les accès d'un impuissant délire
Quand un siècle vieilli de ses mains se déchire
En jetant dans ses fers un cri de liberté,
Un héros tout à coup de la poudre se lève,
Le frappe avec un sceptre . . . il s'éveille, et le rêve
Tombe devant la vérité.
(9th stanza)

. . . Quando, con vece assidua,
Cadde, risorse e giacque. . . .
(2d stanza)

. . . . . .

. . . *Vergin di servo encomio,*
E di codardo oltraggio,
Sorge or commosso al subito
Sparir di tanto raggio
E scioglie all' urna un cantico
Che forse non morrà.
(2d stanza)

. . . . . .

Ei si nomò: Due secoli
L' un contro l' altro armato,
Sommessi a lui si volsero
Come aspettando il fato;
Ei fè silenzio, ed arbitro
S' assise in mezzo a lor!
(5th stanza)

Oh! quante volte al tacito
Morir d' un giorno inerte,
Chinati i rai fulminei,
Le braccia al sen conserte,
Stette, e dei dì che furono
L'assalse il sovvenir!
E ripensò, le mobili
Tende, e i percossi valli,
E il lampo de' manipoli,
E l' onda de' cavalli,
E il concitato imperio
E il celere ubbidir.
(7th stanza)

Oh! qui m'aurait donné
d'y sonder ta pensée,
Lorsque le souvenir de ta
grandeur passée
Venait, comme un re-
mords, t'assaillir loin
du bruit,
Et que, les bras croisés sur
ta large poitrine,
Sur ton front chauve et
nu, que la pensée incline,
L'horreur passait comme
la nuit! . . .

. . . . .

On dit, qu'aux derniers
jours de sa longue ago-
nie
Devant l'éternité, seul
avec son génie,
Son regard vers le ciel
parut se soulever,
Le signe rédempteur tou-
cha son front farouche,
Et même on entendit com-
mencer sur sa bouche
Un nom qu'il n'osait ache-
ver.

. . . . .

Achève! c'est le Dieu qui
règne et qui couronne,
C'est le Dieu qui punit;
c'est le Dieu qui par-
donne;
Pour les héros et nous il
a des poids divers.

Bella Immortal! benefica
Fede ai trionfi avvezza!
Scrivi ancor questo, alle-
grati;
Che, più superba altezza
Al disonor del Golgota
Giammai non si chinò.
Tu, dalle stanche ceneri
Sperdi ogni ria parola:
Il Dio che atterra e sus-
cita,
Che affanna e che consola,
Sulla deserta coltrice
Accanto a lui posò.

(9th stanza)

Parle-lui sans effroi· lui
seul peut te comprendre.
L'esclave et le tyran ont
tous un compte à ren-
dre,
L'un du sceptre, l'autre
des fers.

. . . . .

Son cercueil est fermé:
Dieu l'a jugé. Silence!
Son crime et ses exploits
pèsent dans sa balance:
Que des faibles mortels
les mains n'y touchent
plus!

About this time, and "pour se désennuyer," he wrote the fifth Canto of *Childe Harold*, of which we shall have to speak later on. He also composed and published the *Chant du sacre*, for which Charles X granted him the cross of the Legion of Honor.

During this absence from Italy the poet had the sorrow of losing his child Alphonse; but in May, 1822, M^me^ de Lamartine gave birth to the little girl — later accounted a prodigy of beauty, grace and intelligence — whom the poet named Julia, in memory of his early passion for Julie des Hérettes.

In 1825, the minister of foreign affairs, the Duke of Montmorency, appointed Lamartine to

the office of second secretary to the embassy at Florence, where M. de la Maisonfort was still ambassador.

The poet departed for Italy, once more, in the early days of October, 1825.

PART THIRD

CHAPTER I

MEETING WITH DELPHINE GAY — VALLOMBROSA — ANTOIR AND *JOCELYN*

On his arrival at Florence, Lamartine's health was not in the best condition, while that of his wife had been considerably impaired by the death of their little boy. They both trusted in the Florentine air to restore them to health. Tuscany is like the garden of Italy, and Florence is, as Lamartine calls it, "l'Athènes du moyen âge." The city of art and poetry was also the residence of a very elegant court, and of a refined and cultivated aristocracy. Very promptly Lamartine was accorded the favors of the court, where his fame as a great poet had preceded him. The grand-duke manifested toward him the most cordial sympathy, which it did not take long to change into veritable friendship.

We have already indicated the manner in which, as Lamartine himself tells us, he became acquainted with several celebrated persons. We must now speak of another similar meeting,

concerning which Gustave Planche has indulged his caustic irony.

One day our poet was travelling from Florence to Rome. The mail-coach had stopped at Terni in order to change horses, when the landlord of the hotel where the poet had alighted told him that two ladies, an elderly woman and a young girl, had asked about him, and then had proceeded toward the waterfall. Without a moment's delay Lamartine took the same road, and suddenly found himself in the presence of the most marvellous human creature he had ever seen, shining with youth and beauty, and rendered still more fascinating by the magnificent framework formed by the picturesque nature of the spot, the heavenly clearness of the sky and the rainbow-tinted waters of the falls.

Thus for the first time Lamartine saw Delphine Gay, the splendid young woman who then and there began to exercise over him so profound an influence. Not only was she endowed with great beauty but with a rare poetical intelligence as well, so that Lamartine compares her to Vittoria Colonna.[1] The old lady with her was her mother, and Lamartine, fascinated by

[1] Later Delphine Gay became M^me^ de Girardin, having married the famous author and statesman, Emile de Girardin.

the picture thus presented before him, remained for a while in silent contemplation, himself unseen, before he spoke to the ladies. From that day the most amicable relationship was established between them. To the malicious insinuations which were made later on as to the purity of his friendship for Delphine Gay, Lamartine answered: "Je n'ai jamais vu la femme en Delfine Gay, parce que à Terni j'ai vu en elle la déesse." [2]

Concerning this meeting C. de Mazade adds a detail as strange as it is gratuitous. He says that Delphine Gay brought to Lamartine the news of the curiosity and the admiration of which he was the object in Paris, as the author of the *Méditations*. The meeting occurred in 1825 and the volume had already appeared in 1820! Furthermore we know that Lamartine owed his very place in the embassy at Naples to the favor that the success of the volume had procured him!

In Florence the poet and his family occupied an isolated house — an "hôtel" — in Borgo Ognissanti. It was surrounded by a garden and looked out upon the immense park of the Villa Torrigiani. A little apartment had been reserved for Aymon de Virieu, who was expected

[2] *Cours familier de litt.*, entr. II, p. 112.

to arrive before long in order to recover his health, which had failed him. It is but natural that Lamartine should have numerous friends among the select society of Florence. We notice in particular his relationship with Gino Capponi whom he had already met in Paris as an exile, and with whom he now renewed acquaintance. There was also a numerous and choice French *élite* which used to meet frequently at the palace of Princess Aldobrandini. They formed "a Parisian cercle, under a better sky," according to Lamartine's own expression.[3]

The days at Florence, like the former ones at Ischia, were pleasant for our poet. He enjoyed all the comforts of life and all the satisfactions of worthy pride and self-esteem. He had brought with him his saddle-horses and driving-horses, and was surrounded by kind friends. Moreover his liberality and high position had given him the means of doing a good deed by employing an ancient *émigré* named Antoir, who, having obtained a position in the office of the embassy through Lamartine's influence, was enabled to marry a woman whom he had loved for many years. This Antoir had a noble and cultivated mind, and knew every stone of Florence and its environs. In a short time he had become the

[3] *Corr.*, II, 316.

poet's intimate friend, and together they visited the abbey of Vallombrosa, where they spent several days enjoying the hospitality of the monks.

Ces journées [writes Lamartine] passées au-dessus de l'horizon des agitations terrestres, en compagnie d'un homme né philosophe, dans la confidence de ces arbres, de ces murs, de ces eaux, de ces déserts bourdonnants de végétation, de sources, de vol d'insectes, de rayons et d'ombres, me laissèrent une longue et forte impression de recueillement et de rafraîchissement dans l'âme.[4]

He reproduced his deep impression in the twelfth of the *Harmonies*, entitled *L'Abbaye de Vallombrose*, in which he exalts the life of prayer and meditation of those hermits:

. . . Ce furent ces forêts, ces ténèbres, cette onde,
Et ces arbres sans date, et ces rocs immortels,
Et cet instinct sacré, qui cherche un nouveau monde
Loin des sentiers battus que foulent les mortels.

. . . . . .

Sans doute il t'ensegnaient ce sublime langage
Que parle la nature au cœur des malheureux;
Tu comprenais les vents, le tonnerre et l'orage
Comme les éléments se comprennent entre eux.

The impressions received by Lamartine from this visit at Vallombrosa did not soon vanish, but were still vivid in his heart and mind ten years later when he was writing his immortal

[4] *Harmonies poét et rel.* (Comment., XII[e] *Harmonie.*)

poem of *Jocelyn*, in which Italian characters and scenery have so large a part. He made particular use of them when describing "les sites de Valneige." Nor was Antoir forgotten. The poet himself informs us that "la figure de M. Antoir se trouve aussi dans celle de ce pauvre prêtre." [5] How surprised must Lamartine have been when, in spite of all this and in spite of his devotion to the Catholic faith, his *Jocelyn* was placed on the *Index Expurgatorius* on September 22, 1836, every good Roman Catholic being thus forbidden to read the poem on pain of suffering the wrath of his Church!

[5] *Ibid.*

CHAPTER II

THE FIFTH CANTO OF *CHILDE HAROLD* GIUSEPPE GIUSTI — DUEL WITH GABRIELE PEPE

If Lamartine had many friends and admirers who welcomed him back to Florence, very soon on the other hand many of the patriotic Italians were turned against him. The publication of the Fifth Canto of *Childe Harold*, as already noticed, preceded the arrival of Lamartine in Italy, and when his verses had time to become better known to the Italians, those who aspired to the independence of their country became indignant against him, and with sufficient reason. Lamartine, pretending to impersonate Lord Byron himself, puts in the mouth of Harold one of the most cruel invectives against Italy that could possibly have been devised. He tried afterwards to justify himself by saying that he had intended to manifest Byron's feelings and not his own, but every one knows that the English poet who gave his life for the liberation of Greece, was equally enthusiastic for the freedom of Italy, and could never have fathered words such as these:

O terre du passé, que faire en tes collines?
Quand on a mesuré tes arcs et tes ruines,
Et fouillé quelques noms dans l'urne de la mort,
On se retourne en vain vers les vivants: tout dort . . .

. . . . . .

A la place du fer, ce sceptre des Romains,
La lyre et le pinceau chargent tes faibles mains;

. . . . . .

Monument écroulé, que l'écho seul habite,
Poussière du passé, qu'un vent stérile agite,
Terre où les fils n'ont plus le sang de leurs aïeux,
Où sur un sol vieilli les hommes naissent vieux,

. . . . . .

Je vais chercher ailleurs (pardonne, ombre romaine,)
Des hommes, et non pas de la poussière humaine!

A short time afterwards Lamartine published a pamphlet, *Sur l'interprétation d'un passage du cinquième chant de Childe Harold*,[1] in which he tries to exonerate himself in the manner already described. He says:

Cette imprécation renferme ce que renferme toute imprécation, c'est à dire tout ce que l'imagination du'n poète, quand il rencontre un pareil sujet, peut lui fordnir de plus fort, de plus général, de plus exagéré, ue plus vague, contre la chose ou le pays sur lesquesl s'exerce la fureur poétique de son héros.

Continuing, he explains that the Italians are greatly mistaken if they attribute to him sentiments that are entirely contrary to his own. He

[1] Lucque, chez François Baron, 1826, p. 18.

declares himself an enthusiastic admirer of Italy, adding that in all his preceding works if he has shown a predilection for any particular country, surely that country is Italy. He quotes some of his verses, like those in the eighth *Méditation*, where his enthusiasm for Italy is evident:

Délicieux vallons, où passa tour à tour
Tout ce qui fut grand dans le monde !
. . . . . .
Oui, dans ton sein l'âme agrandie,
Croit sur tes monuments respirer ton génie, etc.

We may be quite sure that he had not the least intention of insulting Italy in any way in the famous passage of *Childe Harold*. He wrote those verses, as he did many other things, without weighing his action. But the indignation of the Italians was intense, and had it not been for the severity of the censorship, which suppressed everything that it was feared would offend the French government, a whole volume could have been made out of all that was written in rebuttal. As late as 1841 Giuseppe Giusti published his famous poem *La terra dei morti*, a fierce and biting satire, directed not only against what Lamartine had written, but, as Giusti himself says, "against all the insults of foreigners."

Yet notwithstanding the vigilance of the censors, the strongest and most emphatic reply es-

caped their vigilance and appeared in print. The author of it was Gabriele Pepe, an exiled Neapolitan patriot, of whom D'Ancona writes: "The poor exile was struggling for a bare living, eating only once a day, doing his own washing, but having all the sincerity of a hero, and as such being celebrated by all his fellow-countrymen and fellow-exiles, who exulted on account of his noble conduct." [2]

Gabriele Pepe, who, as an ardent *carbonaro*, had taken part in the insurrectionary movements of his native Naples, eluded the vigilance of the police by inserting his reply to Lamartine in a pamphlet (of 23 pages) entitled, *On the real meaning of Dante's line:*

"Poscia più che il dolor potè il digiuno"

by G. Pepe, formerly colonel of the Neapolitan army.[3]

Blaming the opinion of many critics who understand that Count Ugolino, led by hunger, fed on the flesh of his own children, Pepe added these words: "Among those who show so little understanding is that rhymer of *Childe Harold* who endeavors to supply his lack of inspiration with sarcasms against Italy that might be called

[2] In *Rassegna bibliogr. della Lett. Ital.*, v, 70.

[3] Firenze, presso Giuseppe Molini, 1826.

insults, if it were not (as Diomedes says) that the blows of cowards and of impotents cannot produce a wound."

A few days after the publication of the pamphlet Lamartine wrote to Pepe, asking him whether the verse of Homer he had quoted was addressed to his poetry or to his own person.[4] Pepe having refused to give any explanation, Lamartine was compelled to ask for a reparation with arms, and accordingly a duel was arranged for. But Lamartine had been hurt by a kick of his horse a few days before and was limping, so the Neapolitan colonel refused to fight until his opponent should be perfectly well, not wishing to have any advantage over him.[5] The difficulty now was to make the arrangements in great secrecy and to find seconds, as the laws of Tuscany were very severe against duelling. Pepe, being an exile, had much more difficulty on this account. Furthermore the police had some suspicion of what was going on, and on the evening of the eighteenth Pepe was notified to present himself before the chief of police the next morning. Without a moments' hesitation the colonel

[4] The "brouillon" of this letter is contained in MS. 4 of the Bibliothèque Nationale and has been published by Des Cognets (*La Vie intérieure de Lamartine*, p. 145, note).

[5] *Corr.*, II, 323.

went straight to Lamartine, who had completely recovered, and they arranged that the duel should take place the next morning before 11 o'clock. He also told Lamartine about his difficulty in finding a second, as he did not wish to compromise any of his friends, who were exiles like himself. With exquisite courtesy he insisted that Lamartine's second should also be his own, but to this the poet would not consent absolutely. So Lamartine provided for Pepe another of his friends, Count de Villamilla — "Américain Espagnol," says Lamartine — whom Pepe saw then for the first time, while Lamartine's second was Aymon de Virieu.[6]

The duel was fought on February 19, 1826, outside of San Frediano Gate, and not in the garden of the French legation, as Nencioni erroneously affirms. The two seconds had pistols, and two swords of unequal length. It had been decided that lots should be cast as to who should have the longer weapon, but Pepe, without a moment's waiting, seized the shorter one and fell in guard. After a fight of a few minutes the poet received a wound in his right arm, and Pepe, having asked him if he felt satisfied, on the affirmative immediately ran towards him and bound the wound with his own handkerchief.

[6] *Corr.*, II, 321–327.

Lamartine also had shown himself a perfect gentleman and a generous adversary. During the fight he always kept on the defensive, never attacking his adversary, "dont la bravoure, la loyauté et la délicatesse ne laissent rien à désirer aux Italiens dont il était en quelque sort le champion." [7]

Lamartine also caused an article to be inserted in *l'Étoile*, a newspaper edited by De Genoude, in which he reported scrupulously all the facts as they had happened, using words of high praise and admiration for the champion of Italy.

From that day on, a real friendship was established between the two, and a few days later Count de Villamilla gave a dinner at which Lamartine and Pepe were present, the latter having the seat of honor. The exquisite delicacy of our poet was shown further in this: Wishing to relieve the noble exile's distress without wounding his pride, he begged him to become teacher of Italian to his little Julia.[8]

It will not be necessary for us to relate at length all the steps that were taken in order that

[7] *Corr.*, II, 327.

[8] Cf. Des Cognets, *La Vie intérieure de Lamartine*, p. 150. — Furthermore the Marquis de la Maisonfort went so far as to send his carriage to Pepe while offering him the shelter of his own house as a place of protection in case of necessity.

the ducal government should not invoke the law against the participants in the duel, and especially against Pepe; it is enough to say that the duke himself gave orders that the duel should be considered *"as having never happened"* ![9]

Thus, by a humorous and genial device all further trouble was eliminated, to the gratification of all the parties concerned; and the dreams of the grand-duke were no further disturbed by fears of possible complications.

[9] Nencioni in *Nuova Antologia.*

CHAPTER III

LA PERTE DE L'ANIO — LAMARTINE AND THE PRINCESS ALDOBRANDINI

It seemed to Lamartine that he had not given as yet full satisfaction to the Italians. Very soon an event of geological nature furnished him the occasion to manifest his love and admiration for Italy. In 1827 a sliding of the soil impaired the magnificent waterfall of the Aniene near Tivoli, and broke it into several small streams, thus ruining its majestic greatness. The consequences seemed at the time to be much worse than they really were, for nature, as time went on, to a large extent remedied the damage done. Lamartine, taking his inspiration from this event, wrote quite a lengthy poem entitled, *La Perte de l'Anio*, which was published for the first time in the *Antologia* issued in March of that year. He thus addresses Italy:

Italie ! Italie ! ah ! pleure tes collines
Où l'histoire du monde est écrite en ruines !

. . . . . .

Source des nations, reine mère commune,
Tu n'es pas seulement chère aux nobles enfants
Que ta verte vieillesse a portés dans ses flancs;

De tes ennemis même enviée et chérie,
De tout ce qui naît grand ton ombre est la patrie !
Et l'esprit inquiet qui dans l'antiquité
Remonte vers la gloire et vers la liberté,
Et l'esprit résigné qu'un jour plus pur inonde,
Qui dédaignant ces dieux qu'adore en vain le monde,
Plus loin, plus haut encore, cherche un unique hôtel
Pour le Dieu véritable, unique, universel,
Le cœur plein tous les deux d'une tendresse amère,
T'adorent dans la poudre, et te disent ma mère.

Lamartine thought highly of his own verses in general, and of these in particular. As soon as composed, he sent them to de Virieu, giving him charge to copy them and to send them to Lamartine's old father.

He accompanied them with a letter, which said:

"Caro amico, voici deux cents vers qui me semblent bons sur l'événement qui vient de ruiner Tivoli et d'anéantir les cascatelles. C'était une heureuse occasion pour moi de faire quelques vers flatteurs en réparation à l'Italie qui me traite complètement bien à présent."[1]

He wrote this in January, 1827, but the poem had not the fortune to please his friend, and on February 13 the poet, sorrowful and surprised, wrote to him thus:

Je suis confondu que tu ne trouves pas mes vers sur Tivoli à ton plein gré. Je trouve que c'est le seul

[1] *Corr.*, III, 2.

morceau par lequel je voudrais lutter avec lord Byron: Italie! Italie! etc.; mais on se trompe sur soi-même.[2]

Lamartine dedicated the *Perte de l'Anio* to an Italian patriot, a Piedmontese, the Marquis Tancredi di Barolo, who was one of his friends and who had married a French lady of great beauty and accomplishments.[3] In his commentary on this *Harmonie* Lamartine recalls the event of a year before and says: "J'écrivis ces vers avec le cœur d'un Italien; et comme j'avais contristé, un ou deux ans avant, cette terre, je profitai avec empressement de cette circonstance pour me réconcilier avec elle."

How well he succeeded in his aim is shown by a critical recension of the *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* which appeared in the *Nuovo giornale dei letterati* then published at Pisa.

Words of enthusiastic admiration are used in

[2] *Corr.*, III, 8.

[3] Lamartine greatly admired and respected this lady, who made him think of the Virgin Mary. Looking at her he says: "Je n'ai jamais si bien compris l'auréole que la piété fait rayonner autour de la figure des vierges, des anges ou des saintes," and he explains that "Cette image m'inspira" when he wrote the XXV of the *Nouvelles Méditations*, which is a beautiful hymn of praise and prayer to Jehovah. After her husband's death she consecrated her life to works of charity, aided in this by the patriot Silvio Pellico, to whom she gave hospitality until the end of his life. (Cf. comment. XXV[e], *Nouv. Méd.*)

describing the volume, and Lamartine is compared to Homer and Columbus!

> Happy Alphonse de Lamartine, who may be considered as one of those privileged beings who are so rarely found! Few literary men have been as universally honored as he in their own century; few literary men have had their name become famous in every part of Europe as rapidly as his name![4]

Concerning *La perte de l'Anio* the following pronouncement was made:

> This *Armonia* must excite in the breast of Italian readers the greatest interest, not only because it recalls to our memory the celebrated verses of Horace, but because this poet (imitating the example of his great predecessor who, having insulted Gratidia, sang the Palinode addressed to the daughter Tyndaris), now converts into praises the insults which he had once before vomited against Italy.[5]

Not long after, in June, 1825, Lamartine wrote a monograph of a political character entitled: "Que faut-il entendre en politique par l'expression d'un ami ou d'un ennemi naturel? Et quels sont les états de l'Europe que la France peut ou doit considérer sous l'un ou l'autre de ces points de vue?"[7]

In it he expresses his views of the relationship between Italy and France in this wise:

[4] *Nuovo giornale*, 1831, XXII, 19.
[5] *Nuovo giornale*, 1831, XXII, 25.

. . . Il y a sympathie entre les peuples comme entre les individus. Elle existe entre la France et l'Italie, elle est plus forte que les intérêts mêmes: vingt fois la France est descendue en Italie, en a ravagé les plaines, saccagé les villes, trahi les espérances, et l'Italie nous aime toujours.

Lamartine alternated grave political preoccupation and diplomatic cares with agreeable conversations and intellectual entertainments, especially such as were given at the Aldobrandini Palace. The gracious hostess was the Princess Aldobrandini-Borghese, to whom the poet dedicated one of his most inspired and mystical *Harmonies, L'hymne du soir dans les temples.* Another of that brilliant company whom Lamartine admired was Countess Ida de Bombelles, wife of the Austrian ambassador. She had been one of the foremost singers of Europe before her marriage, and she possessed a wonderful tragic talent and a sculptural beauty. "Sa beauté était grecque, son génie italien, sa voix céleste," says Lamartine. He dedicated to her the *Harmonie* entitled, *La voix humaine.* It was inspired by her golden notes, at whose sound

Le regret s'attendrit, la douleur se console,
L'espérance descend, l'amertume s'envole, etc.

About Princess Aldobrandini he wrote: "Elle avait l'imagination grandiose de l'Italienne et la

tendresse religieuse d'une jeune mère qui prie pour ses enfants."[6] She, therefore, was the one person whom Lamartine naturally associated with the thoughts inspired in him by the Italian cathedrals, so different from those of every other nation; because, as he says:

> La cathédrale n'est qu'un vaste sépulcre, tout y est sombre, tout y gémit, rien n'y chante: Les voûtes sonores des églises d'Italie chantent d'elles-mêmes; ce sont les temples de la résurrection![7]

[6] *Œuvres compl.* IV, 86.

[7] Comment. on the *Hymne du soir.*

CHAPTER IV

THE LITERARY FRIENDS OF "VILLA VARRAMISTA" — THE COUNTESS OF SALUZZO

Florence at this time was not only rich in the aristocracy of blood and of high social rank, but the aristocracy of intellect was not less worthily represented. It seemed as if the most cultivated spirits had chosen the capital of Tuscany as their rallying-place, and from Florence they spread throughout all Europe the light of their genius in behalf of literature, of art and of liberty. Chief among them were Leopardi, Giordani, Niccolò Tommaseo, Manzoni, Niccolini, Monti, Pietro Colletta. In his correspondence Lamartine makes no mention of Leopardi, Giordani and Monti, so that he does not seem to have been well acquainted with them. His great and ever remembered friend was Gino Capponi, the most perfect type of the literary gentleman and patriot. Two others were also particularly dear to Lamartine, the poet and tragedian Giambattista Niccolini, whom he always remembered with pleasure, and Giuliano Frullani, a

vivacious and versatile genius, naturally inclined to poetry and mathematics, in which latter discipline he became a professor when scarcely twenty years of age. His name is often mentioned with affection in the letters of Lamartine to Capponi, covering a period of several years. He was one of those who "Se non fortunae sed hominibus solere esse amicum." [1]

All these free intellects often met together at "Varramista," Capponi's splendid villa, for which Lamartine often longed after his departure from Florence, and which he never fails to mention in his letters to his Italian friend. On the white marble benches of its garden, amid the coolness of the green branches, the great men of Italy and of other countries often sat discussing the highest subjects, and renewing the memories of the age of Leo X, when Macchiavelli, Alamanni, Iacopo Nardi and other such men used to meet under the secular trees of the Rucellai gardens.

But if Lamartine was thus welcomed and esteemed by the men of letters, we must not fail to take account of a certain misapprehension on the part of some Italians to whom the political and religious ideas of Lamartine were suspicious. He expresses their feelings in one of his letters to the Chevalier de Fontenay, where he says:

[1] Cornelius Nepos.

"Ici il me croyent une espèce d'intrigant, espion, jésuite." Yet he continues:

> Je suis bien avec ma maison, mes chevaux, et bref je suis heureux autant que mon état moral le comporte, et je rends grâces à Dieu de m'avoir conservé la vie, si je dois la passer dans ce divin pays.[2]

As the health of his wife was still uncertain, and as the Court was going to Leghorn, Lamartine also availed himself of the favorable season and conducted his family there, taking up his residence in the "Villa Palmieri," facing the sea, on the road to Montenero. This period, which he passed on the shores of the Tirreno in perfect quietness, often taking long solitary walks, often riding, bathing often in its blue waves, was one of his most productive from a poetical point of view, because he composed there many of the *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*. The cloudless sky, the coolness and the beauty of the place, the immensity of the sea spreading before him, full of the poetry of fascination and mystery, all filled him with deep emotion and inspiration. Very often, as he came back from his long walks along the Ardenza or at Montenero, or on the solitary road where stands the house formerly occupied by Lord Byron, he would find in the garden of his villa the two grand-duchesses con-

[2] *Corr.*, II, 337.

versing familiarly with M^me^ de Lamartine, while the children were playing on the beach. Thus the royal ladies passed entire evenings chatting with the poet, as they had done once before at Weimar with Goethe and Schiller.

The absence of the Marquis de la Maisonfort compelled Lamartine to return to Florence and to assume for some time the entire charge of the embassy. At this time the Lamartines enjoyed for a while the company of Delphine Gay and of her mother, while the Court was at Poggio Caiano.

Worthy of notice is also the correspondence of our poet with the Countess Diodata Saluzzo, the Piedmontese poetess, who was called a new Sappho and had been highly praised by M^me^ de Staël, Alfieri, Monti, Foscolo and Parini, though her writings are now almost entirely forgotten. Lamartine added his own homage to theirs, in writing to her as follows: "La première fois que je lus vos touchantes et brillantes poésies, je sentis quelque chose de neuf qui rappelait l'antique et qui cependant ne l'imitait pas." About her poem *Hypathia* he says: "Je lis votre beau poème: c'est un style perdu en Italie, que vous avez retrouvé."[3] He continues, promising

[3] *Poesie postume di D. Saluzzo*, Torino, Chirio e Mina, 1843, pp. 408, 409.

her a personal visit at Turin in the following April. It seems, however, that this desire was never fulfilled, and we find no trace whatever in Lamartine's writings of any further intercourse between them.

CHAPTER V

LAMARTINE AND MANZONI — ANGELICA PALLI — VISIT TO FERRARA

During the spring of 1827 Lamartine lost his uncle, the "abbé" de Lamartine. He left the largest part of his estates to his nephew, who was then contemplating the acquisition of a villa in the environs of Fiesole. On the coming of summer, however, the poet went back to Leghorn with his family, as the year before, and in July he was quite gratified at receiving from the grand duke the cordon of St. Joseph, an order of knighthood which carried with it the advantage of an annual pension. During this year, at Pisa, he made the acquaintance of Rosini, the author of *La monaca di Monza*, which was written as the continuation of the *Promessi Sposi* of Manzoni; and in the following October he made the acquaintance of Alessandro Manzoni himself.

As we have already hinted in speaking of Lamartine's imitation of the *Cinque Maggio*, our poet had the greatest admiration for the author of *The Betrothed*. Though very different in temperament and habits, their profound and

unshaken religious belief established between them a spiritual kinship. The very aspect of Manzoni inspired Lamartine with respect and veneration:

> Il m'avait intéressé plus encore par sa personne que par ses œuvres. C'est un génie souffrant, un accent de douleur incarné dans un homme sensible, c'est en même temps un génie pieux.[1]

Manzoni at this time was in Florence with his family, and was entertained by Lamartine, who one evening wrote some verses for the album of Manzoni's daughters upon a subject they themselves had selected. The subject was "Julia," the poet's very pretty and intelligent little daughter already spoken of, who was his pride and happiness.

The same verses he wrote afterwards under her portrait, and they are repeated in a letter to de Virieu in which Lamartine tells him how they came to be composed. They are full of affection, and begin as follows:

> Étoile du matin, mon espoir et ma joie,
> Lève-toi dans ta grâce et ta sérénité;
> Que ton beau front voilé sous ses boucles de soie
> Répande autour de nous un peu de sa clarté.[2]

During the same year the two poets frequented together, at Leghorn, the "veglie" at the home of Angelica Palli-Bartolomei, an "improvising"

[1] *Œuvres compl.*, IV, 270. [2] *Corr.*, III, 53.

poetess who had her day of celebrity. Doctor Falcucci, in commemorating her, relates that on one occasion, the conversation having fallen upon the subject of the evanescence of things human, Manzoni concluded: "Yes, everything upon earth is vanity"; and Lamartine: "Oui, tout ici bas est vanité, mais l'amour . . . l'amour n'est pas une vanité!" And he had good reason to affirm this, he who had never been betrayed nor deceived, but who had always found devoted hearts even unto death,—constant and unchanging affections like those of Graziella, Julia, and his wife, who was his loving companion in the days of happiness, his comfort and help in the hours of sadness.

On another occasion Angelica Palli improvised some delicate verses upon the misfortunes of Sappho, and this was one of her best extemporaneous compositions. Immediately both Manzoni and Lamartine addressed to her, *currente calamo* and each in his own tongue, some verses comparing her to the poetess of Mitylene. Lamartine, who wrote verses with the greatest ease, often complained that the rebellious instrument of the French tongue did not permit him to indulge in the "improvvisazione" which seems a privilege of the Italian.[3]

[3] *Opere inedite e rare di A. Manzoni*, Milano, 1883.

To Manzoni Lamartine dedicated his *Hymne au Christ*, written at Mâcon, in which he undertook to imitate the famous *Inni Sacri* of his friend. About this poem he wrote to de Virieu: "C'est écrit avec foi et amour," [4] and in his own comment on this *Harmonie* he speaks with veneration of Manzoni.

In December, 1827, Lamartine paid an official visit to the Court at Modena and passed several days at Parma with Marie Louise, who, although she had reigned in the midst of a splendor worthy of fairy-land, was now "plus à son aise dans ses petits états qu'elle ne l'était dans sa prison splendide des Tuileries." [5]

As time was passing and Lamartine wished for advancement in the diplomatic career, he began to think of leaving his beloved Florence, though now the luxurious life of the diplomat had reached for him its highest point. In fact his recent inheritance allowed him a considerable magnificence. The elegance and artistic taste of the palace he had built increased his prestige, the Court paid visits to him, and the grand-duchesses listened to him with the greatest pleasure whenever he recited, in their honor, the melodious verses he had composed during the hours free from diplomatic cares. He tells us that

[4] *Corr.*, III, 144. [5] *Corr.*, III, 75.

à l'heure où la chancellerie de l'ambassade se fermait, après les dépêches écrites, je montais à cheval sur le quai de l'Arno, je sortais de la ville par une de ces belles portes antiques qui conduisent aux campagnes voisines; j'errais seul entre les haies de figuiers, d'oliviers, de cyprès . . . et j'écoutais en moi les inspirations fugitives, mais presque toujours pieuses qui me montaient *de cette terre au cœur*. Le soleil couché je rentrais . . . J'écrivais alors, de temps en temps, quelques-unes des inspirations qui m'étaient restées dans la mémoire.[6]

Thus it was that the Italian landscape spoke to Lamartine's soul!

In May the family went to the baths of San Casciano, returning in July to Leghorn. Finally, M. de Vitrolles (who had been appointed as substitute in Lamartine's place at the embassy) having arrived from France, our poet abandoned Tuscany and Italy in 1828.

In 1838 he saw Italy once more for a short time, as he was travelling to the Orient; and he returned again in 1844, when he visited Venice for the first time, and perhaps Padua also, as he had promised to do in a letter to Count Carlo Leoni, dated Mâcon, August 10, 1840.[7] In 1844 he passed some time during the summer at Naples and Ischia, always accompanied by his wife: there he wrote *Les Confidences*. He also

[6] Comment. *Méd.* II, 1.

[7] *Epigrafi e prose etc. di C. Leoni*, Firenze, Barbera, 1879, p. 200.

made frequent visits to Sorrento, the birthplace of his favorite poet Tasso, "délicieuse patrie, Non du poète seulement, mais de la poésie."[8] In October of the same year he was permitted, for the first time, to visit Tasso's tomb in Ferrara, and as he was leaving the prison he improvised the *Méditation* entitled *Ferrare*. "J'ai fait 200 lieues pour aller toucher de ma main les parois de la prison du chantre de la *Jérusalem*," he says.[9]

In 1847 he returned once more to Italy, but for a very short time.

How many struggles, how many victories, but also how many sorrows and bitternesses from 1812 to 1847! It was the last time Italy offered hospitality to the man whom in effect she may count among her own poets. And, strange to say, when in March of the next year Lamartine was trying to quell the popular revolt on the Place de Grève and the barricades of the Temple, Gabriele Pepe, his chivalrous adversary of 1826, was performing a similar task in Naples, at the very same hour, and was succeeding in his endeavor while the rifles were pointed at his breast! Truly, we may repeat with Seneca:

Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt.[10]

[8] *Cours familier de litt.*, XVI, p. 21.

[9] Comment. on the XV^e^ *Médit.* It was also on this occasion that the incident related in Chap. IV, Part I happened.

[10] *Ep.*, 107.

CHAPTER VI

LES HARMONIES POÉTIQUES ET RELIGIEUSES

THE volume of *Harmonies* is to a large extent composed of lyrics which Lamartine wrote while in Italy; others were inspired by the memories of his sojourn there. The edition of 1850 has "comments" written by the poet himself, wherein he relates the circumstances under which he wrote the poems and the place where they were composed, and tells us about the persons to whom they were dedicated. The idea of writing such comments was a very unhappy one. It arose late in the poet's mind, when he had forgotten many things. The reader unfamiliar with the exact details of his life may thus easily be led into serious errors.

Gustave Planche also deplores that a poet as real and great as Lamartine should have written these (as he calls them) "niaiseries." In almost every case the dates are erroneous. For instance, the poet declares he has written such and such a poem in 1824 when he was in Italy, while from his own letters we know as a positive fact that he left Naples in the spring of 1821 and did not

go to Florence before October, 1825. Again, the first *Harmonie*, entitled *Invocation*, bears the date 1822, the *Hymne de la nuit* that of 1824, with the comment that it was composed at the "Villa Palmieri" at Montenero, whose situation he describes very accurately, being of course perfectly familiar with the place. The only mistake is about the date. Likewise *l'Hymne du matin* bears the date of 1822. *L'Hymne du soir dans les temples*, dedicated to Princess Aldobrandini, bears no date, but we know when it was composed. Also the splendid *Poésie au passage dans le golfe de Gênes* must not be ascribed to 1824 as the poet writes. *Désir* is inexactly dated 1828, but many other *Harmonies* bear dates between 1825 and 1828 which may be quite accurate. We cannot, however, read without a smile of incredulity the description of some of the circumstances of their composition as Lamartine relates them to us. To give an illustration: The poet tells us that the *Hymne du matin* was written at Montenero upon the white leaves of a quarto edition of Petrarca. All at once a gust of wind blew the pages out of his hands as he was detaching them, and they fell into the sea below. Sorrowfully the poet returned to his home, but the following day a little girl, the daughter of a fisherman, brought him the pages which her father had found float-

ing on the waves just at the feet of Cape Montenero. The fisherman had immediately brought the leaves to the Capuchins of the monastery, but the monks, not understanding the language in which they were written, told him that they probably belonged to the stranger of the "Villa Palmieri." Lamartine, delighted, recompensed the young girl by giving her as many dollars (?) as there were pages. When we reflect that Montenero does not overlook the sea, but leads gradually down to it, and is separated from it by the road which follows the coast, the poetic tale vanishes into thin air, remaining only as a graceful creation of the poet's mind.

More probable than this appears what the poet tells us in the comment on *La pensée des morts*, which is a lyric full of tender melancholy. It was suggested to him one day as he was the guest of the Marquis de la Maisonfort at the Ludovisi villa, near Lucca, at the sight of a rustic nuptial procession which rather strangely moved him to a sense of profound sadness. He wrote the first stanzas to the sound of a bagpipe played by a blind man, while the peasants were merrily dancing!

But to determine whether these are pretty inventions or not does not so much concern us as to show the very large number of poetical

compositions which Lamartine wrote while in Italy. If Naples, Ischia and the enchanted bay furnished him with a rich source of inspiration, richer still flowed his poetical vein under the sky of Tuscany, in the midst of the aristocratic elegance of Florence, under the shadow of Giotto's Campanile where Michelangelo and Macchiavelli are forever at rest.

Beside the lyrics mentioned in these pages, we must notice as having been composed in Italy: *La sagesse*, *Désir*, *Eternité de la nature*, *Encore un hymne* and the very beautiful poem entitled, *Pourquoi mon âme est-elle triste?* Among his most appreciated lines must be placed also *Milly ou la terre natale*, which he wrote in a moment of homesickness, though he so much loved the land that offered him hospitality.

As will be inferred from what precedes, it is by reading carefully the correspondence that we can determine quite accurately the date of a large proportion of Lamartine's poems. For instance, a long quotation from the *Poésie au passage dans le golfe de Gênes* is made in a letter to Aymon de Virieu, dated August 1, 1826, from which it is obvious that the verses were composed before that date. *La perte de l'Anio* was written in January, 1827, as was also *Milly. Désir*, which did not entirely satisfy the poet,

belongs to June of the same year. Another means of determining the date of such poems as are not mentioned in the correspondence, is furnished to us by Charles Alexandre, who, as we know, was private secretary to Lamartine.

He writes, for instance, that one day in November, 1850, at Monceaux, while he was attending to his work, M^me^ de Lamartine came in, and as it was Alexandre's birthday, she offered to him a manuscript copy of the *Harmonies* as a gift from her husband. Thus we can determine that *l'Hymne de la nuit* was composed in Florence and not in Leghorn, March 9, 1826; *l'Hymne du soir dans les temples*, already mentioned, bears the date of March 27, 1826, in the manuscript; and the *Hymne du matin* bearing the date, Florence, April 3, 1826, offers us the most complete refutation of the story of Montenero, if we were not already persuaded of its mythical character by other evidence.[1]

We print below the chronological table of the *Harmonies* composed in Italy, substantially as given by Allais (*Souvenirs sur Lamartine* Paris, Charpentier, 1885) whose ideas of this matter are in accordance with those we have expressed:

[1] G. Allais, *Lamartine en Toscane*, Paris, Oudin & C^ie^.

HARMONIES COMPOSED IN ITALY

(March 1826—August, 1828)

			HARM.
1826 March	Florence	*Invocation*	I: 1
" March	"	*Hymne du matin*	I: 3
" March 26	"	*Hymne du soir*	I: 8
" Spring	"	First sketch of *Jéhovah*	—
" Aug. 1	Leghorn	*Poésie*	I: 10
" Aug. 5	"	*L'Abbaye de Vallombreuse*	I: 12
" Aug.	"	*Aux Chrétiens etc.*	I: 6
" Aug., Sept.	"	*Hymne de la nuit*	I: 2
" Sept. 17	Lucca	*Pensée des morts*	II: 1
" ?	?	*Invocation pour les Grecs*	IV: 3
1827 January	Florence	*Milly ou la terre natale*	III: 2
" February	"	*La perte de l'Anio*	II: 3
" June	Leghorn	*Le retour*	II: 17
1828 March	Florence	*Souvenirs d'enfance*	II: 14
" June	Casciano	*L'Infini dans les cieux*	II: 4
1828 (?)	Florence	*Désir*	II: 16
"	"	*Encore un hymne*	III: 1
"	"	*Éternité de la nature*	II: 20
"	"	*Pourquoi mon âme etc.*	III: 12
?	Leghorn	*La lampe du Temple*	I: 4
?	Florence	*Impression du matin etc.*	II: 7
?	"	*La voix humaine*	IV: 4

But, after all these corrections, the important fact remains that Lamartine, the language excepted, may be considered as an Italian poet. The Italian sky, the sea, the smiling landscapes drew from his lyre the sweetest and most melodious notes. Surely, written far from Italy they would not have had the same tone or charm.

To convince ourselves of the truth of this assertion we have only to read what Lamartine himself says in an enthusiastic description of his sojourn in Tuscany (of which we quote only a part):

. . . J'habitais un de ces magiques séjours [Villa Luchesini]; je gravissais souvent le matin les sentiers rocailleux qui mènent au sommet de ces montagnes, d'où l'on aperçoit les maremmes de Toscane et la mer de Pise. Rien n'était triste alors dans ma vie, rien vide dans mon cœur: un soleil répercuté par les cimes dorées des rochers m'enveloppait; les ombres des cyprès et des vignes me rafraîchissaient; l'écume des eaux courantes et leurs murmures m'entretenaient; l'horizon des mers m'élargissait le ciel et ajoutait le sentiment de l'infini à la voluptueuse sensation des scènes rapprochées que j'avais sous les pieds; l'amitié, l'amour, le loisir, le bonheur, m'attendaient au retour à la Villa Luchesini. Je ne rencontrais sur les bords des sentiers que des spectacles de vie pastorale, de félicité rustique, de sécurité et de paix. Des paysages de Léopold Robert, des moissonneurs, des vendangeurs, des bœufs accouplés ruminant à l'ombre, pendant que des enfants chassaient les mouches de leurs flancs avec des rameaux de myrte; des muletiers ramenant aux villages lointains leurs femmes qui allaitaient leurs enfants, assises dans un des paniers; des jeunes filles dignes de servir de type à Raphaël, s'il eût voulu diviniser la vie et l'amour, au lieu de diviniser le mystère et la virginité; des fiancés précédés des *pifferari* (joueurs de cornemuse), allant à l'église pour faire bénir leur félicité; des moines, le rosaire à la main, bourdonnant leurs psaumes comme l'abeille bourdonne en rentrant à la ruche avec son butin; des

frères quêteurs, le visage coloré de soleil et de santé, le dos plié sous le fardeau de pain, de fruits, d'œufs, de fiasques d'huile et de vin, qu'ils rapportaient au couvent; des ermites assis sur leurs nattes au seuil de leur hermitage ou de leur grotte de rocher au soleil, et souriant aux jeunes femmes et aux enfants qui leur demandaient de les bénir: voilà les spectacles de cette nature![3]

And then the poet sang!

[3] Comment. on *Pensée des morts.*

CHAPTER VII

DIRECT INFLUENCE OF ITALY ON THE *HARMONIES*

An interesting question for us to consider now is, How far did the influence of the Italian scenery directly inspire the *Harmonies?* A full answer to this question would require a volume of its own, but we purpose here to give some typical illustrations as to how Lamartine could turn into sublime poetry the emotions awakened by the Italian landscapes. It will not be necessary for us to consider those *Harmonies* which deal chiefly with a description of nature, such as *Poésie ou Paysage*, *L'abbaye de Vallombreuse*, *La perte de l'Anio*, etc., where of course this influence is unqualified, but we will show how this influence was felt and how it acted on the poet's mind even in those poems that are not entirely of a descriptive character.

Let us begin with *Invocation*, the first of the *Harmonies*, written in Florence in the Church of Santa Croce. The influence of the place is especially felt in the following lines:

Mais c'est sourtout ton nom, ô Roi de la nature,
Qui fait vibrer en moi cet instrument divin !
Quand j'invoque ton nom, mon cœur plein de murmure
Résonne comme un temple où l'on chante sans fin,

. . . . . .

Comme un temple rempli de voix et de prières,
Oú d'échos en échos le son roule aux autels !
Eh quoi! Seigneur, ce bronze, et ce marbre, et ces pierres
Retentiraient mieux que le cœur des mortels?

A little later the sight of the sacrificial cup of the mass evokes the following beautiful similitude:

Hélas ! et j'en rougis encore,
Ingrat au plus beau de ses dons,
Harpe que l'ange même adore,
Je profanai tes premiers sons;
Je fis ce que ferait l'impie,
Si ses mains sur l'autel de vie
Abusaient des vases divins,
Et s'il couronnait le calice,
Le calice du sacrifice,
Avec les roses des festins!

And still a little further on, in the same poem:

. . . Élevez-vous dans le silence,
A l'heure où dans l'ombre du soir
La lampe des nuits se balance,
Quand le prêtre éteint l'encensoir !

. . . . . .

Qu'il est doux de voir sa pensée,
Avant de chercher ces accents,
En mètres divins cadencée,
Monter soudain comme l'encens, etc.

L'Hymne du matin is even more inspired by the beauty of the Tuscan landscape. The poet begins by addressing the mighty Ocean, then the forests, the birds, etc.:

Pourquoi bondissez-vous sur la plage écumante,
Vagues dont aucun vent n'a creusé les sillons? etc.

. . . . . .

Pourquoi balancez-vous vos fronts que l'aube essuie,
Forêts qui tressaillez avant l'heure du bruit? etc.

. . . . . .

Pourquoi relevez-vous, ô fleurs, vos pleins calices,
Comme un front incliné que relève l'amour? etc.

. . . . . .

And the *Harmonie* ends with two stupendous descriptions of the land and the sea, beginning:

O Dieu, vois sur la terre! un pâle crépuscule
Teint son voile flottant par la brise essuyé; etc.

. . . . . .

O Dieu, vois sur les mers! le regard de l'aurore
Enfle le sein dormant de l'Océan sonore, etc.

L'Hymne de la nuit likewise starts with a description of the sunset and the starry heavens of Tuscany:

Le jour s'éteint sur tes collines,
O terre où languissent mes pas! etc.

The observation of the clouds floating before the sinking sun draws from him the following beautiful invocation:

Dieu du jour ! Dieu des nuits ! Dieu de toutes les heures !
Laisse-moi m'envoler sur les feux du soleil !
Où va vers l'occident ce nuage vermeil ?
Il va voiler le seuil de tes saintes demeures, etc.

The sight of the little church which, as he tells us in his commentary, "s'élève comme un temple grec en vue des flots," makes him exclaim:

Que tes temples, Seigneur, sont étroits pour mon âme !
Tombez, murs impuissants, tombez!
Laissez-moi voir ce ciel que vous me dérobez !
Architecte divin, tes dômes sont de flamme ! etc.

From this quotation we may see how delicately attuned is the influence of even the smallest detail of the landscape to the poet's imagination.

In *La pensée des morts* the poet himself confirms what we are saying when he tells us in his commentary that what led him to write the *Harmonie* was perhaps "simplement la vue d'un de ces beaux cyprès immobiles, se détachant en noir sur le lapis éclatant du ciel, et rappelant le tombeau." At any rate the greatest part of the poem is engaged with a description of the beautiful country round Lucca during the winter season:

Voilà les feuilles sans sève
Qui tombent sur le gazon;
Voilà le vent qui s'élève
Et gémit dans le vallon;
Voilà l'errante hirondelle
Qui rase du bout de l'aile
L'eau dormante des marais; etc.

In this last verse we have an allusion to the stagnant waters of the "maremme" which are visible from the place where Lamartine was writing, as he tells us in the commentary.

L'Infini dans les cieux, the fourth *Harmonie* of the second book, written at Casciano, is directly inspired by the beauty of an Italian night:

C'est une nuit d'été; nuit dont les vastes ailes
Font jaillir dans l'azur des milliers d'étincelles;
Qui ravissant le ciel comme un miroir terni,
Permet à l'œil charmé d'en sonder l'infini, etc.

. . . . . .

Là, quand souffle la brise, une colline ondule;
Là, le coteau poursuit le coteau qui recule;
Et le vallon, voilé de verdoyants rideaux
Se creuse comme un lit pour l'ombre et pour les eaux;
Ici s'étend la plaine . . .

. . . . . .

Là, pareil au serpent dont les nœuds sont rompus
Le fleuve . . .
Et plus loin, où la plage en croissant se reploie,

. . . . . .

Un golfe de la mer, d'îles entrecoupé, etc.

Here we have one of the most accurate descriptions of the whole landscape.

This is also true of *Impression du matin et du soir*, which really contains the impressions made on the poet's mind by the "paysage," seen at morning and evening:

L'Orient jaillit comme un fleuve,
La lumière coule à long flot,
La terre lui sourit, et le ciel s'en abreuve,
Et de ces cieux vieillis l'aube sort aussi neuve
Que l'aurore du jour qui sortit du Très-Haut, etc.

. . . . . .

La terre, épanouie au rayon qui la dore,
Nage . . .

. . . . . .

Les dômes des forêts, que les brises agitent,
Bercent le frais, et l'ombre, et les chœurs des oiseaux;

. . . . . .

Le rivage se tait, la voile tombe vide,
La mer roule à ses bords la nuit dans chaque ride, etc.

. . . . . .

Et la foule ressemble, en son bruyant délire,
A ces aveugles passagers
Qui prolongent leur veille aux accords de la lyre, etc.

Even a cursory reading of *L'éternité de la nature* will disclose how far Lamartine is indebted to the Italian scenery for his inspiration, and it is no wonder that in *Le retour*, addressing Xavier de Maistre, he exclaims while protesting his love for Italy:

Voilà, voilà mes droits, plus chers que les tiens même,
On est toujours, crois-moi, du pays que l'on aime.

Thus he makes of himself a citizen of Italy by adoption.

CHAPTER VIII

LAMARTINE'S CORRESPONDENCE AND THE CHRONOLOGY OF HIS LIFE

As we have already stated, Lamartine left Italy in August, 1828. It was a profound sorrow for himself and his wife, both of whom loved Italy and had come to consider it their second country.

> Le vent diplomatique me poussera dans quelques mois à Londres. Je n'ai pas à me plaindre, puisque c'est le plus beau poste de ma carrière et le plus élevé de la hiérarchie diplomatique, avant celui de ministre. Mais un rayon de votre soleil, mais l'inspiration qui sort de vos collines, mais la belle langue, mais tant d'hommes comme vous et vos amis, tout cela vaudrait mieux encore pour moi.[1]

Thus he wrote to his dear friend Gino Capponi on October 28, 1828. Always in all his letters may be noticed this longing for Italy, which he loved with an ardor and with a passion which did not lessen to the end of his life. Notwithstanding the general superficiality and levity of Lamartine's character, it must be acknowledged that both in this love, and in his devotion

[1] *Corr.*, III, 117.

to friendship, he was one of the most constant examples that may be found. He always kept the most faithful and affectionate remembrance of his Italian friends. In his most cordial letters to Capponi, with whom he maintained a constant correspondence to the end of his life, he never forgets to mention his other friends, especially Niccolini and Frullani. The very letters which he wrote to his French friends are all sparkling here and there with Italian sentences, oftentimes the most characteristic and difficult to translate. On the other hand, his Italian friends reciprocated his affection and attachment. They often wrote to him long letters keeping him informed of what was going on in Italy. Most of these letters were written in French, simply as a compliment to the poet, because Lamartine both spoke and wrote Italian fluently. Here is a sample of a letter written to him by Marquis Capponi, September 12, 1829:

... Vous répondre tout de suite, mon cher comte, comme je sens le besoin de le faire, ce n'est pas décider la question qui de nous deux est dans le bon droit; car vous pouvez également croire que je veux m'absoudre ou vous absoudre. Tout ceci a bien peu d'importance; mais il en a pour moi une assez grande, que vous sachiez que je tiens infiniment à votre souvenir, à votre amitié, et aussi que Frullani et moi, nous tenons aux vers par vous promis, et qui auraient pour nous le

charme additionel, que nous croirions vous les entendre dire sous les sapins de Varramista.[2]

A year had hardly elapsed since his return to France, when Lamartine had the great sorrow of losing his mother, whom he so dearly loved: "Chaque jour je sens plus que j'ai perdu la moitié de ma propre existence. . . . Jamais je ne me consolerai et j'aurai trop raison."[3] While he was deep in his sorrow, he received a letter from Capponi (who did not know of the sad event), expressing once more his affection for the poet. Gradually, however, the sorrow of Lamartine lost its sting, as he gave himself up completely to a life of activity.

In 1830 he was received into the French Academy, and in the following year he presented himself as a candidate for parliament in two departments, but his political star not yet having risen, he was defeated. This led him to quit for a time the field of active politics and to undertake his voyage to the Orient, which he had had in mind since 1828. He departed for the Orient in June, 1832, with his wife and daughter, and just before leaving Paris he made the acquaintance of the Italian patriot Poerio, who had been exiled for love of Italy. In 1833 Lamartine was

[2] *Lettere di Gino Capponi*, Le Monnier, 1882.
[3] *Corr.*, III, 176.

already back with his wife; but alas! the beautiful Julia, the light of their eyes, who had grown up amid the mild Tuscan airs, could not resist the torrid oriental climate and had died in Beyrout. It is easier to imagine than to describe the sorrow of the unfortunate parents. In the first letter that Lamartine wrote to Capponi after the sad event, though he does not name Julia, yet one feels that her image is always present to the mind of the bereaved father. His sorrow, though restrained, reveals itself to the friend who had known and fondled the lovable child: "Je n'ai pas doute de vos sentiments dans mes tribulations et dans ma profonde infortune. C'est un coup dont mon cœur ne se relèvera jamais. La vie est finie à qui n'a plus d'avenir." [4]

While at Paris Lamartine never failed to receive and to welcome to his house the Italian patriots living in that city. Niccolò Tommaseo and Giuseppe Micali were among his most frequent visitors. During the next fifteen years his political star made a most rapid ascent, and he reached the highest place of honor and power. Even then he wrote to his friend Giambattista Niccolini:

... If you speak of me to the admirable and excellent Capponi, tell him that I also think continually of

[4] *Corr.*, III, 331.

him, and a happy day of my sad life would be that in which all three of us should meet at Varramista.... Be sure that I shall always be worthy of the name of a friend of yours, and if ever you find yourself unable to approve of me, it will be because you do not understand my motives at the distance you find yourself from our tempestuous stage.

And in 1867 he wrote to Cesare Cantù about his friend Manzoni:

Si M. Manzoni se souvient de Florence et de moi, portez-lui un souvenir qui est toujours un hommage quand il va à un homme tel que lui.[5]

Thus the continuous exchange of thoughts and feelings between himself and his Italian friends contributed to strengthen the bonds of affection toward the "country of his soul."

[5] *Epistolario di A. Manzoni*, note II, 90.

CHAPTER IX

LAMARTINE'S OLD AGE — DANTE AND PETRARCH IN THE *COURS FAMILIER DE LITTÉRATURE* — ORIGINALITY OF LAMARTINE

In 1856 the glorious ascent of the poet was ended. After a series of triumphs, of errors, of sorrows, of self-satisfaction, the poet's star had paled and almost disappeared. He who for an instant had held the destinies of Europe in his hand, was living almost in destitution in a modest house near Paris. It was then that he began that laborious and voluminous work, the *Cours familier de littérature*, of which he also became the publisher in order to realize pecuniary profit.

With his well-known vivacity, fecundity and facility he touched every theme, from Indian poems to Italian poetry, from Job to Racine, from Homer to David, — Mozart, Cellini, Schiller, De Musset, Cardinal Consalvi. It is a break-neck excursion through every age and through all literatures, in the course of which we know not whether to admire more the ever sparkling form or to wonder at the slenderness of prep-

aration and the excessive self-assurance of the author, shown in those twenty-six volumes.

One of the "entretiens" of the *Cours familier* is dedicated to Dante. Strange to say of a man who knew so well the Italian language and literature, Lamartine never understood the greatest of Italian poets. In this particular he is like another acute and aristocratic French intellect, King Francis I (not to speak of Voltaire); King Francis not only did not admire Dante, but did not even wish to hear his work mentioned, though he worshipped art and poetry in general. Yet, if Lamartine did not go as far as Francis I, who dared call the *Commedia* "ces bêtises-là" in the presence of Alamanni, he did not hesitate to compare it first to the songs of Ossian and later to the *Arabian Nights*.[1]

He thus profaned the austere greatness of the Florentine poet who appeared to him to be too obscure and too exclusively Tuscan. He went even so far as to say: "Pour dire notre sentiment d'un seul mot, un grand homme et un mauvais poème." [2]

As was to be expected, the publication of these views produced a storm of protests from literary critics of every nation, but especially from the

[1] *Cours familier de litt.*, IV, 81.
[2] *Cours familier de litt.*, III, 372.

Italians. Guerrazzi was among the most violent, and the famous poet Giovanni Prati among the most correct and dignified. The latter wrote a letter to Lamartine ending in this way: "If you deserve punishment, you have it all within yourself — that of not understanding Dante. . . . You are like a poor blind man who, travelling in the midst of the ocean, does not see the immense greatness of the waters, the glory of the sun and the magnificence of the tempest." [3]

However, notwithstanding what he perhaps thoughtlessly wrote, it cannot be maintained that Lamartine entirely misunderstood the grandeur of the great epic of Dante. In fact, it was the *Divine Comedy* itself which suggested to him his *Poem of the Soul*, which in its entirety remained in the state of a mere conception, but of which the *Chute d'un ange*, *Jocelyn* and *La reine des pêcheurs* [4] are separate episodes. The idea of this great composition came to him as he was travelling from Naples to Rome.

But if Lamartine did not fully understand Dante, his enthusiasm for Petrarch was unlimited, and this cannot be a subject of wonder to us. He went so far in his admiration for that poet as to pretend that in the blood of his own

[3] *Rivista Euganea*, 15 Genn., 1857.

[4] This last he had written, but he lost it while travelling.

mother there were some drops of that which flowed in the veins of Laura de Vaucluse, the beloved of Petrarch: "On rêve, on pleure et on prie avec ces vers divins qui ne vous enivrent que d'encens. Moi je considère Pétrarque comme le plus parfait poète de l'âme de tous les temps et de tous les pays depuis la mort du doux Virgile." [5]

The poetical compositions of Lamartine bear the marks of his admiration. Indeed, we may say that the note of originality which Lamartine contributed to French poetry was an inspiration from Petrarch. Séché rightly remarks on this subject:

> Il est impossible de nier que Lamartine apporta à la poésie française une note nouvelle, qu'en chantant l'amour idéal et platonique sur un mode religieux il fit pour elle ce que Pétrarque avait fait pour la poésie italienne avec ses *Sonnets* et ses *Triomphes de l'amour et de la mort*. . . . Ce sont deux voix du ciel qui se répondent comme deux échos à travers les siècles. On peut leur préférer une autre musique, mais il n'y en a pas de plus éthérée, de plus divine, et tant que le rossignol à qui l'on peut reprocher comme à eux de se répéter toujours, tant que le rossignol charmera le cœur et l'oreille, Pétrarque et Lamartine auront leur admirateurs et leurs dévots.[6]

Lamartine was a great poet. He was a poet even when he was writing history and when his voice thundered from the parliamentary tribune.

[5] *Cours familier de litt.*, IV, 4.

[6] Séché, *Lamartine*, p. 181, note.

He was a man of heart as well, but his principal characteristic, both as a man and as a writer, was an unpardonable levity. He knew that he possessed in his style a marvellous instrument, unsurpassed as to spontaneity, richness and harmony, but he used it without giving much attention to the subject-matter. For this reason the literary output of Lamartine is enormous. He wrote almost everything: verses, romances, tragedies; he treated of history, politics, literature, always in the same sparkling, poetical form, but, on the other hand, always with the same levity, with the immense self-reliance of which we know. He trusted in his own intuition, and more than anything else in a kind of power of divination which he thought he possessed; but he never had any serious preparation. And what he was in his writings he was also in his life. He never corrected himself, and from the hard trials which he suffered, he did not learn any lessons, as far as we can see, so that in this respect he was not like "la plupart des hommes" who "emploient la première partie de leur vie à rendre l'autre misérable." [7]

No other great foreigner can be considered as being in so many ways the product of Italy.

In fact, it matters very little what *physical*

[7] La Bruyère, *Les Charact.*, Chap. II.

characteristics a man of genius, especially an artist, may have inherited from a nation, a people, a race. His artistic personality grows by the impressions made upon him by the things which he contemplates, and which awaken within him emotions that find their expression in artistic manifestations.

When the object which the artist has constantly under his eyes happens to be one which he loves, then the artist is, in the largest degree, the product of that which has so strong a hold upon his mind and heart and imagination. And Lamartine himself has told us that Italy was his *second*, his *greatest* country, that "*of his eyes*" and "*of his heart*," "cette *Saturnia tellus* si desirée." Surely, "La patrie est aux lieux où l'âme est enchainée!" [8]

We cannot close this study without a final quotation from a fellow-countryman of Lamartine — Deschanel. His remarks were written in commenting on a sentence in Lamartine's correspondence, where he says to de Virieu: "Je lis les sonnets de Pétrarque que je n'entendais guère en Italie. . . . Je les entends maintenant comme du français, je ne sais pourquoi, et j'y trouve des choses ravissantes." [9]

[8] Voltaire, *Le fanatisme*.

[9] Cf. Ch. III, Part II of this Essay.

"Ingénu!" — exclaims Deschanel — "il ne sait pourquoi! C'est que l'Italie elle-même, par les yeux et les lèvres de Graziella lui a donné des clartés sur Pétrarque, et sur bien d'autres choses! C'est que l'Italie a parlé à sa fibre de race latine ausonienne! C'est que l'Italie lui a ouvert les yeux, l'esprit, le cœur et les sentiers des Muses. C'est que l'Italie sous toutes les formes et par son ciel même lui a révélé la beauté! C'est qu'elle lui a donné deux sens nouveaux, qui n'en sont qu'un, *l'amour et la poésie!*"

[10] Deschanel, *Lamartine*, p. 50.

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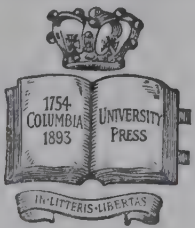

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